

This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

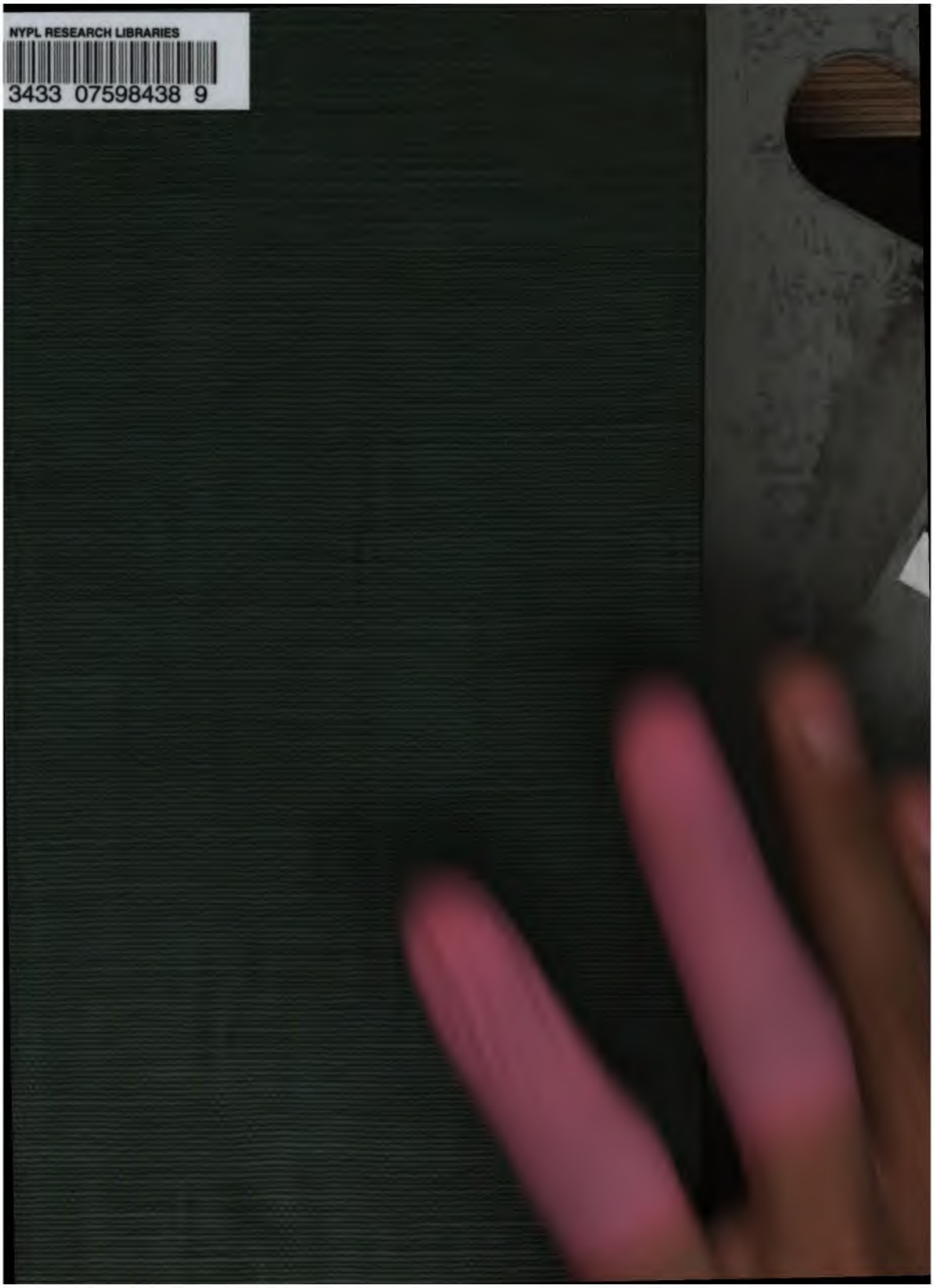
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3433 07598438 9



No. 13 - 15

1861/62 - 1863/64

STF
Vermont
Educ.

SIXTH

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

# Vermont Board of Education,

WITH THE

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY,

MADE TO THE BOARD,

SEPTEMBER,

1862.

---

BURLINGTON:
FREE PRESS PRINT.
1862.

# REPORT.

*To the Honorable the Legislature of the State of Vermont:*

GENTLEMEN :—

Pursuant to law, we herewith present the Sixth Annual Report of the State Board of Education.

The "state and condition" of the schools is sufficiently set forth in the report of the Secretary to relieve us from any necessity of dwelling very minutely upon the details of the working of our school system.

It is with unfeigned pleasure that we ask your attention to the evidences of continued and even increasing success which appear in the statistical summary, and in the official reports of the local superintendents that are largely quoted from in the report of the Secretary.

That the efficiency of our schools should not have been diminished, or the general interest in them have been lessened, during a year so crowded with events and issues of engrossing importance, as the year last past has been, might well have roused a spirit of thankfulness. But we find from the report, that even under all the unfavorable circumstances of the last year, instead of losing ground, as might have been reasonably anticipated, our schools seem to have gained in several important particulars.

The average attendance upon the schools has increased; the amount of money expended for schoolhouses is larger; and a more general success has attended the efforts of our teachers.

Truly the friends of education have reason for gratitude, and it may with truth be said that the assertions so strongly made by the Board, soon after its organization, in regard to the sufficiency and adaptation of the State school system to supply the educational wants of our people, are receiving more and more of verification in each passing year.

It is to be expected that the school laws of the State will from time to time need various modifications, but in the present condition of public affairs, we think the Secretary has done well in almost entirely refraining from suggesting any important changes in the law.

That the law should require some instruction to be given in our schools with regard to the principles of republican government, and the Constitution and frame of government of our own State and country, and the ordinary civil duties of citizens, would seem to be a very self-evident proposition ;—and we do not care to add to the argument in the Report of the Secretary upon that subject. We need only say that we entirely approve of the request he makes for the necessary legislation.

Since the presentation of our last Report, the removal of Rev. Calvin Pease to another sphere of labor, and the recent decease of Hon. J. D. Bradley, have deprived us of the co-operation of two of the original members of this Board.

Eminently fitted by high intellectual culture and sound sense for the places they have so well filled, their removal is a very great misfortune to their associates and an irreparable loss to the cause of general education and to the Commonwealth.

Once more commending the cause of popular education to your thoughtful and fostering attention as inseparably connected with the highest interest of each citizen, and the general growth, prosperity and permanence of the State,

We remain, your obedient servants,

FREDERICK HOLBROOK,
LEVI UNDERWOOD,
T. P. REDFIELD,
HILAND HALL.

# SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Vermont Board of Education,
SECRETARY'S OFFICE, *September, A. D.* 1862.

By the law organizing the Board of Education, it is provided that the Secretary of the Board shall

"Prepare and present to the Board of Education, on the first day of "their annual session, a report of his official doings for the preceding "year, and a statement of the condition of the common schools in the "State; of the expenditure of the school monies therein; and such sug- "gestions for improving their organization and modes of instruction, "together with such other information in regard to systems of school in- "struction in other States and Countries, as he shall deem proper."

*To the Hon. Vermont Board of Education:*

Pursuant to the direction of the law of the State, as quoted above, I now present the Sixth Annual Report of this department.

## OFFICIAL DOINGS.

In the course of the current year, all the official duties required of the Secretary by the law, have been discharged in their due order. An Institute in each of the various Counties has been held, and of these, as has been customary, a particular account will be given elsewhere. All parts of the State have been visited, and the people invited to the discussion of the condition of Education in the State, and the special wants of the schools. Several meetings that had been notified were not held, because, subsequent to the notices, the roads became, on several occasions, entirely impassable from the unprecedented depth of the snow, and it was utterly impossible for me, by public or private conveyance, to reach the localities of the meetings referred to. These are the first meetings for educational purposes that have been notified by me, which I have failed to attend, on account of the weather, since the organization of the Board. The other ordinary duties of preparing and forwarding the Registers and Statistical schedules and receipts therefor have been performed as usual The correspondence of the department with school officials and teachers,

and the friends of education throughout the State, has not been quite as large as during the previous year, but has been quite extensive, and has from the beginning, been steadily increasing in importance. The conduct of the official correspondence is becoming continually a more and more laborious part of the official duties of the Secretary.

Nothing unusual, or beyond the ordinary requirements of my usual line of duties has presented itself, or has been attempted, and therefore, although the ordinary duties of the department have required for their faithful execution several months of labor, in holding the Institutes and Educational meetings, and as much more in the office work necessarily demanded, no longer or more particular record of my official doings seems desirable here.

## TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

The first Institute, for the County of Grand Isle, was held at Alburgh, on the 14th and 15th days of November, A.D. 1861. The sessions of the Institute were held in the Academy, a new and convenient building, erected recently by the liberality of the citizens of the vicinity, kindly proffered for the occasion.

The weather was unfavorable, and the condition of the roads making the travelling unpleasant, the attendance from other towns was not large. But a very fair number of teachers, and a large proportion of the citizens of Alburgh were present.

Mr. Eldredge, the Principal of the Academy, was present, and exerted himself to promote the convenience of all present, and resolutions adopted at the close indicated strong interest in the general subject of Education, and approval of the Institute.

The second Institute was held in the Congregational Church in Cambridge, for the County of Lamoille, on the 19th and 20th of November, 1861. This County, from the beginning of the recent agitation in regard to education, has uniformly manifested a more than common interest in the subject. The Institutes here have always been well attended, and the present was no exception to the rule. Rev. Mr. Wheelock, the Superintendent of Cambridge, and Rev. Mr. Dougherty, the Superintendent of Johnson, both men whose intelligent interest in the welfare of the schools is well known, were present, and cordially co-operated in endeavoring to make the Institute both pleasant and useful.

The attendance, both of teachers and citizens, was large and regular, and all alike seemed gratified with the Institute; and satisfaction with what had been accomplished in this field of labor, as well as confident hope for the future, was generally expressed.

The third Institute was held in the County of Essex, at West Concord, on the 22nd and 23rd days of November, A.D. 1861.

The sessions of the Institute were held in the Universalist Church, which was well filled by the audience. A very large number of earnest practical teachers, together with very many of the citizens of the County

and vicinity were in constant attendance. Mr. King, the Superintendent of Lunenburgh, with Rev. Mr. Sewell, of the same place, came down with some seventy teachers and others, thus giving proofs of the importance of the schools in their estimation.

The earnestness and thoughtfulness of the large audience were noticeable, even in a County where the same characteristics have always been plainly visible. Essex County stands second to none in the State for the cordial and general encouragement which she has always shown to the Institutes.

The session of the fourth Institute began in the Town Hall in South Hardwick, for Caledonia County, on the 26th and 27th days of November, 1861.

The attendance, small at first, steadily increased to the end, and was finally quite large. Mr. A. J. Sanborn, the Principal of South Hardwick Academy, and an earnest and wide-awake teacher, discussed the subject of Geography, and as Superintendent of the town did all in his power to promote the success of the Institute and the comfort of its members.

More than ordinary success seemed to attend the session, and an increase of interest in the schools, as appears from my official correspondence, was among the good effects resulting from the session. Many of the influential and intelligent citizens of the County attended at various times, and signified their commendation of the method and management of the Institute.

The fifth Institute began at Essex, in the County of Chittenden, on the 29th and 30th days of November, in the large room of the Chittenden County Institute.

Heretofore the Institutes, when held in this County, have attracted smaller audiences, and excited less interest than in any County of the State of the same size.

But at this Institute, the attendance, both of teachers and citizens, was unusually large, and the attention and interest manifested were very gratifying. Mr. Sanderson, Principal of the Institute, and Mr. Macomber, the Superintendent of Schools, exerted themselves zealously and efficiently in providing for the wants of all. This was probably the most successful Institute that I have ever held in the County.

The sixth Institute, for the County of Washington, began its session in the Town Hall in Barre, on the 17th and 18th days of December.

Rev. E. J. Carpenter, Superintendent of Barre, Mr. J. S. Spaulding, the Principal, and Mr. Thacher, the Assistant of the Barre Academy, were present and took part in the discussions and instruction of the Institute. And with a very fair attendance, and the hearty co-operation and assistance of many experienced practical teachers and friends of education, a very good degree of success attended the session.

The seventh Institute was held at Swanton, for the County of Franklin, in the Hall of the Academy, on the 20th and 21st days of December, 1861.

The attendance was fair, although not as large as at Franklin in the preceding year, but this was partly attributable to an unfavorable state of the weather.

The Rev. J. B. Perry, the very efficient Superintendent of Swanton, and Rev. B. B. Newton, of St. Albans, took part in the exercises of the Institute, and a number of the practical teachers who were present participated in the discussions that were introduced.

The eighth Institute was held in the County of Orleans, at Derby, on the 25th and 26th days of December, 1862.

The Institute met in the Methodist Church, and as has always been the case in this County, was very largely attended. Orleans County, of late years, has been as distinguished for her large and liberal interest in all matters pertaining to education as for the rapid development of her material prosperity; and the multitude of her citizens, with the earnest attention and interest displayed at the Institute, were indications full of encouragement.

Rev. P. H. White, and Rev. Mr. Gray, of Coventry, and M. F. Varney, of Troy, and Mr. Camp, of Charleston, with many other excellent teachers, were present and took part in the exercises.

The ninth Institute was held in the Chapel of the Academy at Newbury, in the County of Orange, on the 27th and 28th days of May, A.D., 1862. During the session of the Institute the ordinary exercises of the Academy were suspended, and the pupils were permitted to attend the Institute.

Professors King, Smith and Quimby were present during most of the session, and the attendance of teachers, though small at first, uniformly increased to the close. Rev. A. G. Button, the Superintendent of the town, was indefatigable in his efforts to provide accommodation for all, and although the attendance of citizens was not large, the session proved both pleasant and useful.

Twenty teachers, from the town of Bradford, with Mr. Britton, the Superintendent, were present, and resolutions of approval, adopted at the close, indicated general satisfaction.

The tenth Institute was held in the large Congregational Church at White River Village, for the County of Windsor.

The attendance here of teachers, particularly, was very large—as large, if not larger, than ever before in this County.

Ample preparations had been made for the accommodation of all who might attend, and although many more than had been expected were present, all were provided for.

The subject of Arithmetic was discussed clearly and very effectively by Mr. Dana, Principal of the Windsor High School. Mr. Conant, Principal of the Randolph Academy, who has often before assisted in our Institutes, addressed the Institute in reference to Grammar.

The lectures and discussions were listened to with great apparent interest, and for large attendance as well as for thoughtful attention, the Windsor County Institute was quite remarkable.

The eleventh Institute was held in the Academy at Townshend, for the County of Windham, on the 3rd and 4th days of June.

Rev. C. L. Cushman, the Superintendent of the town, had made every exertion to provide excellent quarters for members who might be present; and although the weather was rainy and unfavorable, the Institute was very fully attended.

A large number of Superintendents from the various towns was present, and more of the teachers actually engaged in the schools than were ever before gathered at an Institute in the County.

The Principals of the High Schools at Brattleboro' and Bellows Falls were present during the session, and the Institute may be considered very successful.

The twelfth Institute began its session in the Baptist Church at Factory Point, in Manchester, for the County of Bennington, on the 6th and 7th days of June, 1862.

The audiences at the Institutes have always been large in this County; and the Institute at Manchester was the largest that I have ever seen in Bennington County.

The Superintendent, Mr. Hollister, was active and efficient in whatever could be done to promote the comfort and success of the Institute, and all present seemed interested and gratified.

The thirteenth Institute was held in the Baptist Church in the village of East Poultney, for the County of Rutland, on the 10th and 11th days of June.

There were from 175 to 200 teachers actually engaged in the schools in attendance, and a large concourse of citizens. Every teacher in the town of Rutland, with their Superintendent, was present.

Mr. Moore, Principal of the Rutland Union School, which may be considered one of the best schools in the State, discussed the subject of Geography, particularly with reference to map drawing, and various specimens of the maps drawn by the pupils of his school were exhibited, and received great commendation.

Mr. B. F. Bingham, Superintendent of Rutland, addressed the Institute on the topic of Reading, with great power and effect.

I have seldom seen so profound an impression created in an educational gathering, as was produced by Mr. Bingham's address.

Mr. Henry Clark, Superintendent of Poultney, stirred the minds and hearts of those present, by an appeal for more and more specific instruction in the common schools, in regard to the History and Geography of Vermont.

The village of Poultney was thronged with the members of the session, but all were kindly and hospitably provided for, and this, probably the largest Teachers' Institute that was ever held in the State, was characterized throughout by earnest and thoughtful attention, and closed with expressions of great good feeling and satisfaction.

The fourteenth Institute, and the last of the series, was held in the Congregational Church in Shoreham, for the County of Addison, on the 13th and 14th days of June, A.D., 1862.

The Rev. Mr. Chamberlin, and Mr. Thompson, Principal of the Shoreham Academy, had previously given public and urgent invitations for all to attend, and the result was the collection of a larger audience than I have ever seen at a Teachers' Institute in this County.

Many of the clergymen of the County from the various towns, and many of the elder citizens, as well as large numbers of the teachers and of Superintendents, were present and participated in the discussion of practical questions regarding the teaching and management of schools.

An unusual interest in education seemed to be aroused, and resolutions, after discussion, were adopted, pledging the endeavors of those present to secure a thorough improvement of the schools, and indicating cordial approval of the measures adopted by the Board.

## REMARKS UPON THE INSTITUTES.

The sessions of the Institutes for the year, have been remarkably well attended. Indeed, from their commencement, in 1857, each year has shown a steadily increasing interest in them. The attendance upon them has been regularly growing larger, and while, as a whole, the attendance, both of teachers and citizens, has been uniformly good, some of the Institutes for the past year have been larger than ever before.

Again I find myself warranted in claiming the Teachers' Institutes as the most economical, the most acceptable, and the most efficient instrumentalities for stirring in the general heart a deeper interest in popular education. The sessions, while too short to interfere very much with the regular employment of the teachers, or to become wearisome to the hospitality of the citizens, are long enough to afford opportunity for a general discussion of the best methods of teaching and discipline, and in this way to be of great benefit to the younger class of teachers, so largely employed in our schools.

The Institutes, during the year, as in previous years, have been every where received with warm welcomes in the localities in which they were held, and have been entertained with universal and kindly hospitality. The fact that such gratuitous entertainment has, for so many years, been extended, speaks equally well for the general and prevalent interest of the citizens in the cause of education, and for the acceptable character of the Institutes.

The labors of the sessions have been participated in by practical teachers whenever they were present and willing to assist. Discussions of the many practical questions in regard to modes of teaching and methods and principles of discipline, have constituted a leading feature, and appealing to the experience of intelligent citizens present, who were not actually engaged in teaching, have contributed largely to enhance the interest and add very materially to the usefulness and efficiency of the meetings.

From the first, a constant effort has been made to divest the Institute of a certain tendency towards abstract and more theoretic disquisition, which has been alleged to be a general characteristic of educational meetings. The existing condition of the schools, their more pressing wants, their capacities most susceptible of rapid and feasible development, and

the state of public sentiment in regard to them, have been kept steadily in view; and all the force of all our educational meetings has been expended in making them conducive to the practicable and essential improvement of the schools.

This manifest effort, and the degree of success in this direction that has attended it, have commended the Institutes particularly to the good sense and sound judgment of our citizens. Thus avoiding all attempts at the display of brilliancy or genius, in which they might and probably would have egregiously failed, and directing themselves entirely towards the improvement of the schools by means of earnest and determined hard work in a plain and practical way, they have been continually winning an increasing favor, and are now quite generally recognized among the intelligent as useful and efficient instrumentalities for educational improvement.

The practical discussions of points of school law, of methods of instruction, of modes of government in schools, that are held in the Institutes, together with the Town and County Associations that have sprung up, have stirred the public mind and given rise to a general agitation, and thus have created a more wide-spread and more vivid and useful interest in all matters pertaining to the schools than has ever before existed in the State. And hence, during the last year, while the hearts of all have been filled with anxiety in regard to public matters, and while every other business occupation or interest has of necessity languished, our common schools have suffered little, as a whole. The higher schools have lost a large proportion of scholars by enlistment, but the general manifestations of interest in the common schools have been quite as decided and encouraging as in any year since the organization of the Board.

These statements are made, not only as the results of my own personal acquaintance with the condition of the schools, and of the public mind in regard to them; but are amply corroborated by the concurring testimony of the Superintendents of the various towns in the State, as will appear from an inspection of their official returns to me, herein incorporated.

---

## CONDITION OF THE SCHOOLS.

It is by no means an easy task to give, in one general statement, a clear and comprehensive view of the condition of the three thousand schools in the State. And yet such annual survey is at once the most useful and most interesting portion of every educational report.

In order to an adequate discharge of this necessary and important work, recourse must be had mainly to three sources of information. The official returns of the various Superintendents, with the remarks accompanying them, conveying the knowledge and impressions of those who, in each particular locality, are most conversant with the condition and wants of the schools under their immediate care and supervision, give the most particular and reliable account that can be had. And by a comparison

of these local impressions from reliable sources, in regard to the prominent points of greatest interest, a very good general idea may be obtained.

I here append, therefore, a selection from the official returns of the Town Superintendents of Schools, which will furnish ample material for the formation of a general opinion of the condition of our schools, so far as may be gathered from a comparison and aggregation of the individual views of the different local officials.

# REMARKS OF TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS.

That we need, in our town, particular attention to the comfort and convenience of our school-rooms, not to say beautifying of them, I am well aware. There seems to be a lack of interest on the part of the citizens, in this respect, as well as in visiting schools. My experience, as teacher, has taught me that the interest of the pupil is increased or diminished according to the interest expressed by parents and guardians. Hence, I think, in order to have good efficient schools, the matter must not rest with the Superintendent and teacher; but every one must take hold and help forward this great work of effectively enforcing our school law.

D. C. BARBER, *Bridport.*

It is but just to remark that our teachers are every year improving in the mode of keeping the registers, and that District Clerks are more and more intelligently answering the interrogations proposed to them. Our people more highly appreciate the school system of the State, in proportion as they become familiar with its details.

No one of our districts is disposed to evade the law in regard to the support of schools, or the examination of teachers. Indeed, I am confident that no teacher would be tolerated who had not been examined and approved.

I am happy to be able to report a growing interest in our community, on the subject of common schools. The smaller districts manifest more concern to secure competent teachers, and a greater readiness to appropriate more liberal sums for their support.

The topics which were most urged, in my recent report to the Town, were:—The importance of more prompt attendance in the morning, and through the entire exercises of the school each day; the care of the school houses by the pupils; the manifestation of interest by the parents, by frequent visits to the schools; and the still more liberal appropriation of money for their support, so that even the smallest schools may have the services of well qualified teachers.

As the Report has not been printed, I venture to copy a few remarks upon these topics.

It is obvious to any one who examines our school registers, that want of prompt attendance is a serious defect in our schools. Late attendance, though better than absence, is every way injurious to the delinquents themselves, and to the schools to which they belong. The regular exercises are interfered with; the teacher's plans are thwarted; confusion and waste of time inevitably follow. In many cases, no doubt, parents are more blameworthy for this defect than their children. This topic is one which has numerous and important bearings on the formation of character. We all know that the prompt man is usually the efficient and successful business man, and we all acknowledge the truth that, "just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined." We do not expect that the boy who grows up with dilatory habits, will, when he arrives at manhood, be prompt and ready when called to act. He is the man who always keeps the committee, of which he may happen to be a member, waiting—with whom it is always eight o'clock till nine or ten in the morning,—one o'clock till two or three in the

afternoon, or six, till seven or eight in the evening. Every business man knows the vexatiousness of such habits. I will, therefore, only add that the formation of correct habits should begin in the home circle; should be nurtured in the common school, and be matured in active life.

Akin to the fault just noticed, is the practice very common in the schools, for pupils to get dismissed before the close of the exercises. The extent of this evil has not been so apparent, until the Register required such cases to be marked by teachers. Parents would be surprised to see how the Registers, in some of the districts, are defaced by marks for tardiness in the morning, and dismission in the afternoon. Some such cases, we know, must occur; but they might be, they ought to be, they would be, less numerous than they are, if parents properly considered all the bearings of this evil.

A word ought to be said respecting the *care* of our school houses by the scholars. There are several reasons why children should be required to avoid all unnecessary injury to these buildings; nay, why they should be taught to protect them from injury. The lesson is invaluable, as helping to form habits of care. It is invaluable, too, as tending to encourage a wholesome respect for public buildings, without which they can never be preserved in good condition. Let our school houses be well finished, and let every child be taught that he is no more to mar them than he would his mother's parlor.

There are two topics to which I wish to call your attention before closing this report. On both of them I have dwelt in a former report, but we need "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," until our practice shall become conformed to the requirements of duty.

The first of these topics is the neglect of parents to visit the schools. There is no thing, in reference to which, teachers oftener express regret; true, there has been some improvement, in this respect, within a year or two, but the neglect is still such as no parent practices in reference to any other matter in which they have concern. Is it not inexplicable that so many parents, who cheerfully tax themselves to any extent to purchase necessary school books, and support good teachers, manifest no interest in the schools when once in operation, taking it for granted that all is right, without an attempt to ascertain the truth by personal inspection. Parents! shall we not, for *one year*, attempt a reform in this matter, and observe the effect which will be produced both upon ourselves and our children.

The other topic to which I allude, is the more liberal appropriation of money for the support of schools. A good beginning has been made in some of our districts, but we need to engage in this work from the conviction that not merely the best good of our children is involved, but that in so doing, we are actually enhancing the welfare of our real estate. Every man's farm is directly affected by the education of the community in which it is situated. Where intelligence and the kind offices which commonly attend it pervade a community, there the good citizen, who is seeking a settlement, will fix his location, if possible. There he will be willing to pay for real estate in proportion to the privileges to be enjoyed; while such a citizen will as certainly give a wide berth to the neighborhood where ignorance and its usual concomitants prevail. Nothing is more obvious than that it is for the interest of every citizen, whether he has children or not, to aid liberally in the thorough education of the community. He is safer in property and in person; and if he has children, they are less tempted to dissipation and vice. The Secretary of the Board of Education has kindly complimented our school houses. Why may not, why should not our schools merit a still higher compliment?

LYMAN MATTHEWS, *Cornwall*

---

The schools in this town are supported principally on the Grand List, the only true way, in my opinion, giving all an equal chance for an education, although it causes considerable fault-finding on the part of heavy tax payers that have no scholars to educate. The teachers, with one exception, have given good satisfaction, the scholars having made rapid progress. The parents and committees take too little interest in their schools. The only knowledge they have of them is what their children say. There has been but one instance of parents or committee visiting schools this winter. There are four school houses in town, three of which are of stone, decent, but not nice, and have no way of ventilation except by doors and windows. The other one was built recently, and is tastily planned for convenience and comfort. All stand in the highway, and have playgrounds the whole length of the road.

WM. H. TENBROECKE, *Panton*.

It gives me pleasure to report that, in many respects, our common schools have been attended with a marked degree of success, which is indeed encouraging; still I find them, in some important points, most sadly deficient.

Our school houses, with but two or three exceptions, are located in the highway, and some even in so close proximity to the road itself, that the safety of the pupils, while at recreation, is greatly endangered.

Though most of the buildings are comfortable, still they are far from being attractive and pleasant to the student, and are calculated rather to repel than attract the scholar.

Our teachers have generally been intelligent, and have discharged their duties with commendable zeal and fidelity. There has been, in some of our schools, a decided lack of thoroughness in the rudiments of learning, and I have found students in Algebra, Geometry, Astronomy, and studies of equal grade, who did not understand the spelling book, and to whom simple interest was a profound mystery. This I conceive to be a great defect, and one which demands serious attention.

I believe that pupils, in our common schools, should not be allowed to pursue the higher branches of an education until, by strict examination, they are found to be perfectly acquainted with common school studies. Some of the schools, during the past winter, have been seriously impaired by the introduction of the higher mathematics, thereby commanding too great a portion of the teacher's time and attention which should be given to other studies.

I have been utterly astonished, in visiting schools, to find so little order, and an entire lack of discipline, as has characterized *some* of our schools during the past year. We have had three female teachers in town during the past winter, and they kept the three best schools we have had. Our female schools have excelled in good order, thorough discipline and correct instruction.

I am extremely sorry to report so many instances of tardiness, and I cannot account for the great number there seems to be. I certainly trust there is no other Superintendent who is compelled to set down such large figures, in this respect, as I have.

One great hindrance to the prosperity of our schools, is the entire lack of interest manifested by parents, and others, intimately connected with the school. Most of our schools, the past winter, have not been visited by parents, committee, or anybody else, interested at all, except the Superintendent; as long as this is so, we shall not gain a very high stand point, I fear.

The schools throughout the town are entirely supported upon the Grand List, which is, I think, the only proper way.

The study of music is being introduced into some of our schools, which I most surely encourage, for if there is any one thing elevating and enlivening in the school-room, it is certainly the joyous happy song.

I believe, on the whole, our schools have improved during the past year, and I hope, during the coming year, to be enabled to remove many of the defects from which we now suffer.

E. T. THOMPSON, *Shoreham*.

---

As a whole, I think the schools of the past year, in our town, have been good. The effect of the present system in the schools of the State, (though *hooted* at by many,) is every day becoming visible to those who watch its proceedings, and even its enemies begin to yield the point. The schools of this State needed a thorough renovation, and in my opinion, this system will bring it about.

S. BUSHNELL, *Starksboro'*.

---

The schools in Vergennes are supported wholly upon the Grand List, and are therefore open to all, without expense. The scholars, however, are sadly deficient in their regular and punctual attendance on school. One day you may find fifty or sixty in the school-room,—the next, not one-fourth of that number. Improvement, therefore, in such a school is impossible. The teacher may be qualified, in all respects a model teacher, and may labor most assiduously for the advancement of his or her pupils, yet there can be no order, system or permanent improvement. The barrier to the correct and rapid advancement of the children in our schools, is the fault of the parents; as they have nothing to pay, their children are kept from school on the slightest pretext. I should consider it the dawn of a happier era if I was certain that a single parent had visited our schools the past year. It would seem, if they have any interest in the district school, it is nothing more than this,—when their children become troublesome and

ungovernable at home, they send them to the school-room to be managed by the teacher, and if, after all other means have been exhausted, he should apply, as a dernier resort, the salutary and very appropriate discipline of the birch, you would suppose the day of general doom had come, and the last vial of wrath was about to be poured upon the head of the trembling and awe struck teacher. It is then and only then that you will find the parents visiting our schools. The good and sovereign people will talk fluently and ardently on almost every theme, their farms, their merchandise, their cattle, their horses, and even on the frivolities of fashion; but common schools, where children are to be trained and prepared for doing good or evil in this world, and for happiness or misery in the world beyond the grave, is the last subject that is mentioned, or that finds a place in their affections. We hope, however, by the beneficial workings of our excellent school system, and by the unwearied labors of all the friends of education, to arouse and bring every parent in the State up to their duty in this great and benevolent work of improving and perfecting our common schools. We have good teachers, and they have labored assiduously, early and late, for the advancement of their pupils, and yet many of them have not made that proficiency which they would have made if they had been constant and punctual in their attendance. But this has not been the fault of the teachers, but of the parents. We need much a new and commodious schoolhouse, and have purchased a beautiful site for such a building. But the unhappy state of the country has so augmented taxation that it precludes the possibility of erecting such a building the present year as we need. Our anticipations, however, of a better future are bright, our hearts are strong, and our determinations cannot be thwarted. We must and shall have a school building soon that will be an honor to the city, State and humanity.

B. B. ALLEN, *Vergennes.*

---

Schoolhouses should be sound, clean and comfortable. If not, the scholars are inclined to mar and disfigure them, or otherwise show their displeasure so much as to disturb the school. The most skillful and successful teachers are always the cheapest at the prices they usually ask for their services. I insist that the fuel for the use of district schools should be provided by a tax on the Grand List.

D. N. CASEY, *Whiting.*

---

I think the present school law, in the main, is a good one, if the people would take interest enough in the education of their children to carry it out fully and entirely.

The people do not attend the public examination scarcely at all.

Half the teachers hire out and *begin* their schools before they obtain their certificate.

I think that if the Town Superintendents were dispensed with, and a County Superintendent made in their stead, with a regular salary, sufficiently large to pay him for giving all his attention to the schools, we should have better schools, and it would be less expensive to the State.

HARRISON PRINDLE, *Arlington.*

---

My report, herewith submitted, shows a decided advance on former years, in the matter of the attendance of scholars, and a more general attention of our people to the important subject of our common schools.

The Registers have never been as well and carefully kept as the past year; and while one or two have been somewhat negligent in attending to this part of their duty, yet, for the most part, our teachers have shown a laudable ambition in the neatness and accuracy with which they have registered the condition of their several schools.

The feeling, that all this particularity called for, was unnecessary, and which very generally pervaded the minds of teachers and others, at the time our present system was first introduced, is, I am happy to say, fast giving place to the true view, that this part of our work absolutely underlies all the advantages hoped for from the system and labor of our present Board of Education.

We are beginning to see that without this array of facts, which the Register of each district school discloses, we should be destitute of those data which give the great interest to the very able reports which are annually made by the Secretary of the Board to our Legislature. Lay aside these "dottings down," called for in the Register,—and which have been called useless machinery"—and you eviscerate the

whole system and paralyze every effort to improve the condition of our schools, and for the palpable reason that you know nothing about them. I am aware there is nothing new in all this, and yet this very subject has hitherto been a great drawback with many, because it was said to involve complication, and called for useless care and labor.

But the second thought, I am glad to believe, is setting the matter right, and what was at first a great objection to any change, is now seen to be the only instrument to awaken the minds of the people to the necessity of a radical reform in our schools.

Who knew, ten years ago, that the amount expended about our district schools in Vermont was larger, by hundreds of thousands of dollars, than all the other expenditures of our government combined? Who knew *anything* about the common schools? Who knew the number even of children? Now, I am happy to believe, that our teachers are ready to co-operate with the Board, by giving faithfully and accurately all that important information which a due attention to their Registers can alone furnish.

To my mind, a very important point gained:—for, as before said, this was the popular objection urged against the establishment of the Board and the change consequent, at least in some portions of the State, and perhaps to a greater or less extent in all.

We are just beginning to see some of the advantages of awakening the popular mind to the importance of a thorough investigation of a subject which has hitherto been strangely neglected, and yet of most vital consequence to all our interests present and future.

GEO. B. MANSER, *Bennington.*

---

It is a fact known to every intelligent citizen who has taken the pains to inquire into the real causes of our slow progress towards perfecting our present system of education, that one of the greatest obstructions to the success and prosperity of our schools, is the everywhere manifest indifference on the part of the parents. Until, by some means or other, parents can be aroused from this deep lethargy, in respect to the subject of education, and so be brought to see the important position they actually sustain to this cause, by virtue of their parental relations; until they can be moved by some incentive to co-operate with the teachers, in the government and discipline of their children, and thereby be induced to look upon them as friends who need sympathy and aid, rather than aliens, who are to be impartially criticized in every honest effort to benefit the pupils under their care, we must expect the inevitable consequences,—*bad schools, discouraged teachers,* and *bad, unruly scholars.*

Now to remedy these principal defects, which, at present, so much retard our success, should be the highest aim of all friends of education; and this should cause them to adopt some appropriate plan, which, if it does not succeed in *interesting* parents, by appealing to their better judgment, will, without fail, be an appeal to the pride of their hearts, incite them to some earnest efforts in behalf of our schools. If we can once get parents to co-operate with teachers in the government and discipline of their children, even though it be effected by means of selfishness, it is far better than to have our schools continued, year after year, without any real progress in the cause of education. This is my motto, if we cannot interest them in one way, let us take the other and only alternative, and appeal to their pride. Availing myself of this opportunity at the last March meeting, I drew up a resolution, to the effect that the Town Superintendent should be permitted, by consent of the citizens, to report the conduct of bad scholars in his annual report. The resolution, was in substance, as follows:—"*Resolved,* That the Town Superintendent is hereby requested to take cognizance of the deportment of obstinate and willful scholars, who have come to years of discretion, and report the same *personally* in his annual report at March meeting." Although it is not the law, in the strict sense of the term, yet as the sentiment of the people expressed, it was passed by a unanimous vote. With this consent of our citizens to a matter so intimately connected with the progress of our schools, if succeeding superintendents will be firm in their course, and carry out this resolution embodying the desires of the people, in all its strength and virtue, it is my candid opinion that parents will no longer live in a state of educational apathy, but will be aroused to take sufficient interest in the subject of schools, to know, beyond a doubt, whether their children are respectful and obedient, or guilty of "obstinate and unruly" conduct. For to obtain this satisfactory knowledge it will be necessary for them to visit the school, and to accomplish that object which will be encouragement to the patrons of education and which alone will give us permanent success. In the accomplishment of this end, it

must prove effectual in reducing *very many*, if not all, of the unjust complaints entered against teachers by prejudiced parents, who are always willing to credit every exaggerated report which their children bring home, in regard to the teacher, and if they have suffered corporal punishment for disobedience, of which they, the parents, are kept in ignorance, are also willing to urge them on in other acts of misdemeanor as a sort of revenge. This faithful report of their children's conduct ever staring them in the face, will make them visit the teacher and hear his report; and if parents discover by this course that their children have been in the wrong, they will either assist the teacher in making them obedient or remove them from school.

An amendment to this resolution, giving the report of those scholars who have been faithful, upright and studious, might be an additional incentive to parents, and also have a tendency to increase their interest in the success of their children through the desire of emulation, and thereby prove very effectual in advancing the cause of education by giving an impetus to the progressive improvement of our district schools. In this case, every parent will work with that interest in the instruction of his children which is prompted by parental love and pride, and strive to give them that moral, physical and intellectual development which alone tends to make them good and influential citizens. Indeed, it is my sincere hope, if all other means shall fail, that this plan may prove successful in producing a co-operation on the part of teacher and parent, and so cause the latter to render every assistance needful to give encouragement to the teacher, and scholarship to the sons and daughters of Vermont.

JOHN B. HOLLEY, *Dorset.*

---

In one or two of the districts in this town, every year since I have been officially connected with schools, the usefulness of the schools has been seriously injured because of an insufficient supply of unsheltered wood. Believing that the difficulty arises from the system of raising the wood by a tax on the scholar, I ventured to make the following suggestions, in my annual report to the town. He who will take the trouble to examine this matter, will find that, with two or three exceptions, the several districts have not provided a suitable place in which to keep the fuel for the school-room, and that it is paid for by a tax upon the scholar. He will also find, as a result of this method of procuring wood, that frequently, nay, generally, the wood is green, of an inferior quality, such as can be got most easily and cheaply, and that sometimes there is not enough of any kind, and so the school must suspend until somebody brings another load of wood. He will also find that where any place is provided for the wood other than the highway, it is generally kept in the front entry of the schoolhouse. Now, undoubtedly, this is better than no shelter, but allow me to ask, in how many of the homes of those who hear me, is it the custom to keep the wood for the house in the front entry? And if the practice is not fit and becoming in a dwelling house, is it more fit and becoming in a schoolhouse? The system of raising wood by a tax on the scholar, works very unequally upon those who furnish it, as well as injuriously upon the school. Often have I heard it said of certain members of a district, that they furnished more than their share of the wood every year, and of certain others, that they shirked their duty and furnished none at all. Tax the wood upon the Grand List and there is an end of all this. Probably the amount of wood consumed by each school, on an average, is not more than five or six cords, which can be bought at a cost of $12 or $16. Add this sum to the amount to be raised on the Grand List, and there is hardly a man who would realize the difference. The result would be that each district would have constantly on hand a good supply of dry wood. To those who are accustomed to the daily use of dry wood in their houses, it is hardly necessary to argue the superior value of a school thus furnished with a good supply of well housed fuel when compared with one furnished only with green wood of an inferior quality, unsheltered and gathered out of the snow by the scholars as it is wanted for hourly use. I therefore respectfully and earnestly recommend that the wood for the schools be raised by a tax upon the Grand List, in all the districts, and believe that after this plan has been tested by experience, it will be uniformly adopted.

The winter school in district No. 6 was commenced by Miss ———, continued a few weeks and closed. It has been charged by some, and believed by others, that this teacher was dismissed by the Superintendent. The only way in which a Superintendent can discharge a teacher, is by revoking his certificate. In this case the certificate was not revoked, and besides, the teacher has published an article, over her own signature, wherein she has clearly stated the reasons why she closed the school. One of the strongest reasons stated for leaving the school, was an insufficient supply of wood, which was always green and under the snow, and it frequently happened that the fore[illegible] was half gone before the house could be comfortably warmed, and for several days

the school was entirely suspended for want of wood of any kind. The school was continued by Mr. ———, but is no better furnished with wood than before. I understand that for four days past there has been no school, because there is no wood. But the teacher holds on valiantly, determined not to surrender, but to draw his pay regularly, "whether school keeps or not.' And he is right. Here is an example of the way in which wood is furnished when it is raised by a tax upon the scholar, and an example which forcibly illustrates the correctness of the views which have just been presented.

For the reason above stated, if there is wisdom in legislating at all for schools, I believe it would be wise to legislate thus much further—that the wood for the use of the schools should be raised by a tax upon the Grand List.

J. B. HOLLISTER, *Manchester.*

---

The public interest in our common schools is gradually approaching that point which their importance demands. The Southwestern town in the State has been much influenced by the educational movement of 1858, but it has required, and will still require *time* to develop all the evidences of the influence. Our schoolhouses, with two or three exceptions, are in tolerably good condition. Two of them have been painted during the past year, the only two that were ever thus favored in this town,—and it is to be hoped that their superior appearance and adaptation to fulfill their high purposes in the districts where they stand, will lead every community to speedily possess itself of the like!

On visiting the school in one of the old schoolhouses, in January, I found many of the scholars crowded and idle around the stove. I took a seat at one of the scholar's desks, near the wall, keeping on my thick overcoat, but was soon obliged to leave it on account of the *weather*. The holes, which admitted currents of cold air, were large, and "too numerous to mention." The stove was calculated to draw a crowd in school hours, and to last a century, in spite of sledge-hammers and other engines of destruction. Sixty-seven names were on the Register,—average age eight and one half years, and most of them came nearly a mile to school. I quote a few remarks to this community, contained in my report to the town, "Men of District No. —, your neighborhood is the most populous, wealthy, publicly located, and enterprising of any among us. Many of you have barns, corn cribs, and other out-houses, as much superior to your schoolhouse as a mansion is to a hut. Now why is it that you suffer that dilapidated hovel to stand year after year, a monument of your public apathy, disgracing you, and breeding sickness in your tender children, who are confined there through the cold winter days and months, crowded and shivering, and consequently learning comparatively little from their books? Is it because your cattle, corn, and dollars are better than your offspring; or rather that you never realize that so much of your duty in this matter still remains unperformed, nay, even unattempted? You would do an act of justice and humanity, by removing from public gaze and criticism, the ancient relic; and in lieu thereof, build two neat edifices, which will accommodate forty scholars each, and be easy of access. The public is slow to learn that a child is in every way best improved by things attractive; that the idea of beauty exerts upon a young mind a stronger influence than the idea of utility. The alphabet, first lessons in reading, arithmetic, geography, and morals, are soonest learned and longest retained with the aid of pictures. If a child's books are as beautiful as its toys, it may be led by kind persuasion to love the books the best. So if its schoolhouse and surroundings are made as pleasant as the objects at home, the child may be led to love its school as well as its home; and thus be prepared to receive in full all the blessings which the the school can confer."

Most of our winter teachers were females, and most of them were very successful in their business; they were all well known, being of home production.

I think prudential committees are growing more cautious as to whom they employ, justly preferring candidates of established reputation—perchance those whom they have already tried and liked—even though they ask higher wages than their doubtfully qualified untried rivals.

The examination of teachers is also becoming more thorough and impartial, though it will never become sufficiently so, until Superintendents shall have the moral courage to manfully meet and face disappointed candidates, and their grumbling, backbiting friends. It often happens that a person wishes to be examined for a single term, in some small and backward school; but my experience has taught me that it is unwise to grant a certificate in such case, for a certificate obtained once will often help a candidate get a second, which would be denied by virtue of a fair examination. Thus one incompetent, third-rate teacher, by showing certificates, and a willingness to teach for

small wages, may dupe and abuse a dozen districts and Superintendents, and keep as many worthless schools.

I think teacher's wages should be paid by a tax on the Grand List; but it seems that if the fuel and board were furnished by all the families, in proportion to the number of scholars sent by each, thereby a deeper and more direct interest would be felt in the school, and the property holders, who often constitute the minority, would be less at the mercy of the poor, who would have the sole control of funds which they had no part in producing, unless it was in determining how much said funds should be.

DANIEL J. BARBER, *Pownal.*

---

It seems that parents are not sufficiently impressed with the importance of co-operating with teachers, especially in the government of schools. Out of twenty-five cases of corporal punishment that have been inflicted in this town during the past year, seventeen were in one district, and mostly by an experienced teacher, who has always been noted for her mildness in school, and has seldom, if ever before, been obliged to resort to such punishment in the government of her schools, while several females in that district have, for several years, been noted for taking the part of their scholars in all their difficulties in school.

I have seen nothing during the past year to change my mind as to the propriety of supporting our schools entirely by a tax on the Grand List. The argument which has been urged before our Legislature, that it would interfere with the prevailing practice of boarding around, seems to be a very weak one. I know of several districts that have for many years practiced making a tax on the Grand List, payable in board, and delivering it to the teacher at the commencement of school. While our armies which maintain the very existence of our government are principally composed of the sons of the poor man, it seems hard that he should be obliged to pay a tax, *per capita*, for his children.

W. H. FOLLETT, *Readsboro.*

---

A word in regard to schoolhouses and their surroundings. If there is one spot or place in this wide world that should be more pleasant and attractive than another, it is the schoolhouse, with its surroundings. For here in embryo is the hope of church and state. And upon a proper development of these young minds depends the weal or woe of unborn millions—the prosperity or downfall of our boasted institutions. During the susceptible years of childhood and youth, the mind is in its formative state, and impressions are easily made upon it. The young mind receives these impressions from *every surrounding thing and circumstance*. Hence if a child is sent from a quiet, pleasant home, to an unpleasant, ill-formed school-room, with rough and mutilated benches, and when he goes out to play, finds his play-grounds composed or covered with mullen stalks, cobble stones and canada thistles, he early learns to dislike study and the associations of school life; or, at the best, forms his habits and disposition corresponding to his surroundings. I think this is a subject which ought to be agitated, and kept continually before the public mind until it is understood and appreciated in all its bearings.

Although the condition of our schools is good, comparatively, and districts generally are getting roused up to the necessity of having competent teachers, still there is a lack of thoroughness on the part of both teachers and pupils. Hence we find them advanced in Algebra, Geometry, and the like, when they are quite inefficient in the first principles of the primary branches. It matters not how long a time a pupil may spend in study, or how many books he may pass through; if he is not thorough in what he studies, he is not a scholar.

I have visited all the schools in town during the year, at least once each term, and the most of them twice, and I find that those who should feel the greatest interest in the schools, *the parents*, seldom, if ever, visit them. They find time for almost everything else,—to visit their friends, to look after their cattle and sheep, and especially the "hired man," who takes care of them But to the hired man, who has charge of their children, and who is to instruct and fit them for the proper discharge of the great duties of life, they seldom give a passing notice, erroneously thinking that when they have employed a teacher, and given him or her the key which unlocks the school room, they have done their duty. But it is a sad mistake. Parents should visit the schools more, unite their influence with that of teachers in the effort to interest their children. In fine, show them, by frequent visits, that they feel a deep interest in their welfare; also, that they are obtaining an education which will fit them for usefulness and happiness.

J. N. WISEMAN, *Rupert.*

The schools in town, for the year past, have been attended with more than their customary degree of success. Prudential Committees have been quite fortunate, in most cases, in securing the services of good teachers, and the people are beginning to realize that one good school is worth a dozen poor ones, and that it is impossible to have good schools without good teachers.

The multiplicity of school books, in years past, has done much to retard the progress of our schools, which evil seems to be partially overcome, though in many schools much of the benefit of this new arrangement is lost, on account of a failure on the part of those to carry it into effect.

With regard to defraying the entire expense of our schools by a tax upon the Grand List, I believe it to be just and right, as every tax payer has a deep and abiding interest in the education of the rising generation. I believe it to be but just to the rich as well as poor, to ask that our schools be thus supported; it is often the case that our poorest citizens have the most scholars to send to school, so that a tax upon the scholar to defray the expenses of boarding a teacher often times becomes burdensome. This is not right, and every fair minded and candid citizen must acknowledge that it is unjust.

WM. J. HAMILTON, *Sandgate.*

---

Having served but one year as Superintendent, my experience does not enable me to suggest as many thoughts and opinions as I otherwise would. However, it may be proper for me to remark, that the statistical interrogatories have been answered as well as the imperfectly kept registers, and District Clerks' defective reports, will allow. For instance, one teacher merely kept record of the number of days attendance, entirely neglecting (through nothing else but smartness,) to answer the interrogatories required of her in the Register. Again, one District Clerk in naming the amount expended for teachers board, says, "*Nothing,*" which I consider *very cheap.* Numerous other questions have not been answered at all by some, or what is just as bad, *erroneously* answered, therefore not enabling me to make as complete and accurate report as I could wish.

I have one word to say in regard to Teachers' Institutes. I think they are having a very beneficial effect. In my visit to some of the schools whose teachers' had attended the Institutes, I saw that very many hints and suggestions there given were adopted and acted upon, resulting in the advancement of both discipline and instruction.

L. J. MATTISON, *Shaftsbury.*

---

In reply to your solicitations, I would say that our schoolhouses are, with one exception, comfortable, yet none of them are what they should be. They are not furnished with anything to demonstrate a clear and accurate knowledge of the many subjects taught in our schools—save a black-board. In my opinion, a Globe, or a set of outline maps, bear the same relation to Geography, that a slate and pencil do to Arithmetic.

Our schoolhouses have no more land attached to them than the few sacred feet upon which they stand, consequently they are not inclosed by a fence, and the scholars are turned into the highway for recreation.

It has not been customary in this town for Superintendents to make an annual report at our March meetings. I have never heard a report called for until this year, and then some were struck with surprise. I took occasion, at that time, not only to allude to the condition of schoolhouses and the comparative progress of schools, but to point out some of the prominent reasons why some schools are retrograding, while others are rapidly progressing. And this, as I believe, is owing mostly to the reluctance, or dereliction of duty on the part of parents and committees, to assist and encourage the teacher in the noble cause in which he is engaged, or even to visit his school. If a man cannot afford to educate his children ! if he cannot afford to give them what little knowledge they may acquire by attending a well-regulated district school, what, if I may be allowed to use the expression, "in Heaven's name," can he afford to do for them ? One design of the present school law is to induce scholars to be more regular and punctual in their attendance. Now in a school consisting of thirty scholars, and taught sixty days, instead of each scholar or a majority of them attending every day, not more than two can be found in any district, having no absences. About ten will average forty days ; as many, perhaps, thirty days, and the rest will vary from five to twenty days.

The parents of those who attend school the least, are the ones who are habitually complaining *because their children are so* backward.

A school Register is to a district, or teacher, what a day-book and ledger are to a merchant or farmer. If a Register is lost, or improperly filled out, the district is not entitled to its share of the public money; neither can the teacher lawfully recover his wages. Any person who offers himself as a teacher, and cannot comply with the requirements of a Register, with printed directions before him, and so explicit, ought not to be approved as a teacher. District Clerks frequently accept a school Register from a teacher without even looking to ascertain if it is properly filled out and certified to, which is somewhat neglected, and just as if they were in duty bound to receive it. Every Clerk is responsible for the safe keeping of a Register, but no Clerk is under any obligation to accept one, and should not until he knows its directions are fully complied with.

In the selection of teachers, I find that the Committees are governed more by the teacher's wages than by his qualifications. I frequently hear them remark that "two months good school is better than four months poor school." I really believe a good school cannot be too highly esteemed, while a poor school is worse than none. The Committees of backward districts labor under a great mistake by hiring teachers, simply because they can hire them cheap. Were I at public examination, to assign each teacher his respective situation, I would advise the best teacher to teach in the most backward district. Forsooth, I can conceive of nothing better calculated to keep a school in a backward state than the employment of a *poor teacher*.

E. G. BACON, *Sunderland.*

---

Our schools, for the greater part, are on nearly the same level as the year before. Quite a number of our teachers were beginners, and were mostly successful. Great interest has been manifested, on the part of teachers, in order that their schools should be interesting and profitable. No change for the better, concerning schoolhouses, has been made during the past year. There are some schoolhouses in this town that ought to be remodeled by fire, as no other means of repair would be satisfactory.

In such houses I find our inferior schools, while in those districts where the best schoolhouses are, I find the most interesting schools, and the best disposed scholars.

When the people in this town are willing to sacrifice enough to build suitable and commodious schoolhouses in which to educate their children, then remove all former prejudice between Mr. A. and Mr. B., likewise sectarianism from the school-room, and from the hearts of their children, then, and not till then, may the people of Burke look for any great change for the better in their common schools.

A. P. WALTER, *Burke.*

---

There has, in many respects, been a decided improvement in the schools of this town the past year. They have been less expensive than formerly. They have been better attended. Oral instruction has been adopted more extensively, and the old formal manner of teaching by questions from text books has begun to die out. The order of our schools has improved more than fifty per cent. since last year. Several of our schools, last year, were so disorderly that their utility was nearly destroyed; but the past year, out of twenty-five terms taught in this town, only four have been at all disorderly, and no one of these has been exceedingly so. In our opinion, the greatest difficulty in our schools is the want of proper order. In 1860, I visited several schools where the teachers were constantly annoyed by questions from the scholars of the school during the recitation of a class; so much so, that I saw five at one time on the floor going to the teacher with questions. While she was answering these, the attention of the class before her wandered from the topic of recitation, and ere it was again won another interrogator appeared.

We think that during recitation, no one should be allowed to leave a seat or ask a question, except the class reciting.

Again, an over-estimate of the capacity of the scholar has been very injurious to our common schools. Teachers are apt to give a lesson suited to their own capacity, rather than to that of the pupil; hence a superficial knowledge of the branches pursued must be the result. There has been quite a reformation in our schools the past year, in this respect, and still there is room for improvement.

The presenting of statistical information before the minds of parents, showing the actual loss in each district, by non-attendance, tardiness and dismissal, cannot be too highly valued. For when facts prove to them that they have lost one fourth of the attendance upon their schools, which they would have had if their children had attended regularly, they begin to think that a remedy must be sought.

These losses, in each district, were presented a year ago, in a report to the people of this town, and an urgent appeal made for an improvement in the future. And the past year our loss has been reduced to 8749½ days. The year before, our loss, by the absence of scholars from school, was 12102 days, showing an improvement this year over last year of 3352½ days. This appears to be a material change for the better, when we consider that the actual number of days attendance upon all the schools in town during the year, is only about 30000, and also how difficult it has been the past winter for scholars to get to and from school on account of bad roads.

We look upon the Teachers Institutes now provided for by the school law, as the most powerful agent that can be brought to bear upon the public mind. The beneficial effects of the one held here last fall, have been so marked that they cannot well escape the notice of the most superficial observer. It met with the general approbation of our citizens, and many have expressed a wish that another may be appointed here as soon as it may be deemed fit by the Secretary of the Board of Education.

A. J. SANBORN, *Hardwick*.

---

In this town we have had a very successful year in our schools. There has been a decided improvement in most of our schools during the present school year. In most instances, well qualified and experienced teachers have been employed. With a very few exceptions, our schools have proved highly satisfactory.

In several instances we suffered a serious disadvantage in the smallness of our schools, but this cannot well be obviated. A recent effort was made by the town to reduce the number of districts. In this they were successful, but enlarging the smaller schools to any considerable extent is difficult. However well qualified the teacher, and devoted to the interests of the school, without a goodly number of scholars, it must necessarily be dull and uninteresting.

The text books recommended by the Board of Education, are used in most cases, but not wholly. The consequence attending, is an unnecessary and unprofitable multiplying of classes. The greater the number of classes the less attention the teacher is able to give to each class, hence it will lessen the profitableness of the school. While we save a few pennies in the purchase of proper text books, we suffer a serious loss in the school-room. It will require time to secure the change contemplated in our school system, but we trust the day begins to brighten.

M. C. HENDERSON, *Lyndon*.

---

To hire female teachers in the schools for winter which contain large boys, is a bad practice, as far as the experiment has been made in this town, except in rare cases. To argue for it on the ground of economy, is being penny wise and pound foolish. Some first-rate teachers who ought to teach and succeed, are by this means totally discouraged; and some turbulent boys who ought to be reined by the strong arm of law and discipline, and who might thus be made good scholars, are confirmed in habits of lawlessness. The current statement, that there are no boys that will not yield to a female teacher, if she is lady-like and gentle, is not according to my observation of schools in this vicinity.

It sometimes happens that the District Committee refuses to deal with refractory pupils according to law. What objection would there be to a law referring such cases to the Town Superintendent or the Selectmen?

I am compelled to say, that one of the conclusions most certainly drawn from my notes on the condition of the schools here, is, that Greenleaf's Arithmetics are not suitable for our common school children. Some of them used Eaton's last winter, which appears to be much better. I see no reason why Eaton's would not answer every purpose in our schools, supposing, of course, that all the children know Colburn thoroughly. I make these notes with some diffidence, but if *anything* is said about the condition of schools in this town, this must be said, that Greenleaf's Arithmetics, for various reasons, do *not work well*. There are too many editions, leading to a multiplication of classes, too many books, too little logical arrangement in them, and too much matter. The text books in other branches are well enough.

Much good has been done by offering prizes for excellence in *spelling*. The schools have done more in this than in any other branch. To form a class who have missed only two words during the winter, appears to be a good method. Prizes may be given to the best three in this class. We have some marked cases of teachers who have improved by attending Teachers' Institutes. *Native tact* is the thing after all.

Much might be done to elevate the *tone* of common schools, by insisting more strenuously upon thorough qualification in the teachers. It is better to refuse a certificate

to a poorly qualified candidate, whatever his connection may be, than to give it. Persons presented themselves for examination and [illegible] Caledonia, Peacham, Separate, Believe[illegible] Allen[illegible] [illegible] equally simple words. I issued qualified certificates in some cases requiring candidates to better their spelling if they would have a full recommendation. It often happens that poor *spellers* are poor *teachers*.

There is a good public spirit here in regard to schools. Parents generally cordially co-operate in all measures for maintaining good order and improving the quality of recitations.

CHARLES O. THOMPSON, *Peacham*.

---

Under the present system of supervision, our schools are evidently improving, and from year to year a higher standard of excellence is attained.

During the past year the schools in this town have been unusually successful and prosperous. The teachers have, with few exceptions, entered into the spirit of their work with a degree of energy, enthusiasm, and faithfulness highly commendable. The schoolhouses are nearly all in good repair, and provided with good black-boards, but are deficient, almost without exception, in books of reference, Outline Maps, Globes, &c.

School Committees have manifested their indifference by neglecting to visit the schools, in a majority of the districts; but the parents and friends of education generally, have taken more than usual interest in the welfare and prosperity of the schools, having visited them frequently, encouraging both teachers and scholars, and showing that they do, in reality, feel solicitous about the mental and moral training of the rising generation. Occasionally, however, a person is met with who expresses his dissatisfaction with our system of school supervision, asserting that it is useless and expensive. It is generally found that such persons never visit the schools, and are, therefore, disqualified for judging in the matter; while any supervision which *they* exercise is in the way of exertion to secure the services of the teacher who will work for the smallest pay; and when they succeed in getting a *cheap teacher*, they generally have a *cheap school* and *cheap scholars*, who, under such training, are likely, in their turn, to make *cheap citizens*. The increasing interest of the people at large, in the subject of the popular education of the young is gratifying and encouraging; but there is still much to be done before all will be brought to realize the true importance and magnitude of the great work, and to devote themselves with untiring energy to its accomplishment.

As parents, as teachers, and as friends of civil and religious liberty throughout the world, we cannot serve the cause of education with an energy of purpose or a faithfulness of zeal too steadfast and ardent;—and let us not forget that the prosperity, happiness and improvement not only of the present, but of the future generations, depend upon the moral and intellectual training of those immortal minds which are now the subjects of our deep solicitude and tender care.

T. McCLURE, *Ryegate*.

---

As you solicit expressions of opinion upon topics pertaining to our common schools, I append a few thoughts that have suggested themselves to me during the past year.

I have become thoroughly convinced that one of the greatest impediments to the advancement of our schools, is the apathetic feeling and almost culpable neglect with which parents regard them. The majority of visitations during the past year have been made by young people and friends of the teacher, while, so far as I have had opportunity for judging, the visits of parents have been "few and far between." Probably nearly one-half of our schools have not received one solitary visit from the parents of the district. Not one encouraging word to the teacher, who is laboring week after week for the good of their children, not one approving smile to those little ones that are daily assembled together to fit themselves for the great and arduous duties of life. Their responsibilities, they think, are ended as soon as the teacher is hired and the children are "off to school." Now such a course of procedure is wrong, and this habit of indifference is so fixed and universal that it is really one of the greatest evils with which the common school teacher has to contend, for a child always forms his opinion of the importance of a thing by the interest manifested by his parents; and if our schools are not of sufficient importance to interest the parents, it is hardly to be expected that the children will place a very high estimate upon the common school privileges which the State has placed at their disposal. Again, our schools can never be elevated to their desired position until districts and committees cease their penuriousness, and instead of searching hither and thither in quest of a "four-and-sixpenny

pedagogue," devote their time and energies in procuring the services of a real live teacher, whose mind is fitted for the business and whose heart is in the work. When this position has been taken, and our people are made to see that a poor teacher is dear at any price, while the services of a good one are actually invaluable, one great step will have been taken in the right direction.

I have taken pains to make the returns as reliable as possible, but owing to the negligence of some of the clerks and teachers, many corrections have had to be made before even an approximation to the truth could be arrived at. Yet as the appearance of the Registers is much better this year than last, I can but hope that the public mind is becoming awakened to the importance of correct and reliable information relative to our common schools.

The new school law has already proved itself a blessing, and as all can clearly see that each year finds it working its way still further into the affections of the people, we may fairly conclude that the future will show to its originators and friends that their efforts in behalf of an object so glorious have not been in vain.

ALFRED S. LAMB, *Sheffield.*

---

I have been very much impressed, during the past year, with the necessity of some special training of those who teach for their work. But few of those employed in this town have accomplished nearly all that is desirable, or reasonably to be expected, though upon the whole, our schools were an improvement on those of the previous year.

Our schoolhouses are not what they should be either. I wish some of the parents were obliged to sit upon some of the benches which they consider good enough for their children, for three hours a day for one week, and I venture that Yankee ingenuity would by that time be sufficiently developed to find some way for relieving aching backs and cramped legs, which would not rest satisfied till the old house gave way to a new and more comfortable one.

C. P. FROST, *St. Johnsbury.*

---

As you again solicit remarks from Superintendents, I am happy to say that I have noticed with pleasure the names of some scholars in the Registers who have been present every day of the term, and without one mark of tardiness. This, I think, promises well for their future character and success in life. A habit of punctuality—of never being behind time—is a valuable attainment, one well worth cultivating. Still irregular attendance is one of the great evils to which our schools have been subjected. We earnestly hope that the attention of parents may be more fully awakened to the importance of scholars attending constantly while they do attend, not only for their individual good, but for the general good of the school, for the effect of irregular attendance is not confined to the tardy and inconstant, but its baneful effect is felt throughout the school.

Much might be said in reference to other matters in connection with schools; such as the importance of good houses, attended with neatness; sufficient play grounds, &c., &c. But we think our school law is working a great change, and that the minds of parents are becoming more generally awake to the cause of education.

J. M. PILLSBURY, *Sutton.*

---

There has evidently been an improvement in the schools of this town the past year; teachers have instituted a more thorough course of study and discipline, and have done their duty in properly keeping the school Registers and returning the required statistical information, which may be relied upon as correct. The information furnished by the district clerks is less reliable, though undoubtedly it approximates very near the truth. The answer to the question, "number of heads of families in town," is not correct, as there is one district in town which has lost its organization, and the number there is not returned. There are five comfortable and tasty schoolhouses in town, which have been built within the past few years, two of which were erected the last summer. The subject is being agitated and citizens *must* see the absolute necessity of comfortable school houses. There is considerable opposition to the school law, and many so-called intelligent men prate about its utter inutility, but when asked to point its defects, they are wholly unable so to do, except, they say, that it makes unnecessary expense and the schools are no better than they were before the present law was enacted. Yet they are forced to admit that some how scholars are wiser advanced in the arts *and sciences in our* common schools now at the age of sixteen, as

they were a few years ago at the age of twenty years. So far as my observation has extended, its operation meets the wants of our schools, and particularly so when the school officers are efficient men. The benefits resulting must soon bear down all opposition of these over-wise philanthropists.

Some of the obstacles in the way of the advancement of our common schools seem to be beyond the reach of legislation. Among these is the practice of hiring cheap teachers, and the want of union and harmony in feeling and action that exists in many districts; disputes entirely foreign to the school are forced in and are the most fertile source of disturbance in many localities. Until citizens are willing to leave neighborhood contentions out of the school and unite their influence and energy with that of the teacher, our schools will fail to accomplish their legitimate and desired results.

STEPHEN C. SHURTLEFF, *Walden.*

---

I think there is in nearly all of the districts an increased enterest taken in the schools. There is considerable interest taken in the school meetings, and the school offices, &c. There has been one small school house built in town during the past year, and some others repaired. Nearly all are now very comfortable. I am of the opinion still, that the entire expense of schools should be raised on the Grand List.

R. J. MORSE, *Bolton.*

---

Whole number of children of school age, 2220. Whole number who have attended school at all, summer term, 1169; whole number who have attended school at all, winter term, 1061. Only about half of the children of school age in the common schools; estimated number attending select and private schools in the town, 107. Where are these 1000 children not accounted for?

The common schools of the town are in a condition encouraging. One great step towards farther improvement is a *more systematic* and *steady management*. The annual election of a *different* Prudential committee is a great hindrance to their progress; personal considerations rather than the school's welfare making the change, too often.

One can hardly overstate, I think, the great good that would accrue to our schools from a larger attendance on the annual school meeting, of the *intelligent* residents of the several districts, especially of *parents*. Too often the affairs of the district are left entirely in the hands of those who, having no children to send to school, are only anxious to *reduce expenses*. Awake! good men and thoughtful, and give to your country and to humanity's service a wise and better generation. "The child is father to the man." "The common school, the nation's safety."

JOSHUA YOUNG, *Burlington.*

---

Herewith find my statistical report for the year. I can claim for it only an *approximation* to the truth. I find the Registers so imperfectly kept, especially that portion of them filled out by the district Clerks, that it has been a perplexing task to make anything out of them.

Our schools have been generally prosperous for the past year—something in advance, I think, of previous years. Our teachers have most of them, sustained a very good examination, and though some of them have, to some extent, failed either in government or in *tact to teach*, yet it is believed they have generally endeavored to meet faithfully the responsibilities of their stations—some with decided and creditable success.

I am more and more convinced that there are but *few* teachers qualified to meet the wants of the community. Many who have a very good knowledge of the branches they are required to teach, are sadly deficient in their knowledge of the best modes of instructing and governing minds. In many schools I have found a wonderful listlessness, evidently arising from inability in the teacher to *interest*—to *catch* and *hold* the attention of the pupils. In such circumstances, it is utterly vain to look for anything like progress. The pupils, instead of being required to *think*, and to think *intently* and *vigorously*, merely commit to memory words from the book, the meaning of which they do not understand, and of course cannot explain. Such scholars cannot be said to have learned anything and often go out from our common schools with less of common sense than when they entered them. By the unnatural training to which they have been subjected, thought has been repressed instead of being stimulated—the energies of mind crippled, its faculties fettered, and the once active, observing

mind that was ready to lay everything under tribute to increase its store of knowledge, is paralyzed.

If the teacher has not the power to *awaken* the *interest* and *fasten* the *attention* of his pupils; if he cannot call out their latent energies; if he cannot make the school-room a mental laboratory, where mind shall act upon mind, and thought elicit thought, he is wanting in an *essential qualification* and must fail of success, no matter how profound a scholar he may be.

And now what must be the remedy? Will it do to revoke the certificates of such teachers? In the present state of things, how would their places be supplied? Is there any remedy so long as parents are so indifferent as to be willing to pay for such services, and call it teaching?

That there is so much indifference on this subject, on the part of parents, is indeed most surprising. A man that would not send a laborer into his field to mow, or plow, or hoe his corn, without careful supervision, who would not allow him even to feed his pigs, or his hens, without looking daily to see whether he gave too little, or too much, will send his children to school day after day and term after term without even once visiting the school or taking any pains to ascertain whether his children are being properly instructed or not. This seems to me one of the most discouraging facts connected with our schools. I have labored to place this matter in a right light before our school committees, and others, and I trust there is a little more interest felt on this subject now than formerly. It is particularly gratifying to see any change in this respect in the right direction.

The multiplicity of studies and of text books introduced into our common schools is, I think, a very great detriment to them. In some of our schools there are more classes than there are scholars in attendance,—for instance, say some thirty classes in a school of only about twenty scholars, many of them studying Algebra, Latin, Geometry, &c. The utter impossibility of any one teacher, in a common school, doing justice to such a number of classes, is seen at a glance. The inevitable consequence is, the elementary branches—the very things which our district schools are designed to teach, are almost entirely neglected, or crowded aside. This is a difficulty that can be obviated only by the establishment of graded schools.

C. M. SEATON, *Charlotte.*

---

The school law, in the main, works well and is gaining favor among the people. I would, however, recommend that the public money should be divided to the several districts in proportion to their *aggregate* instead of *average* attendance. It would certainly be just that a district having a given number of scholars and sustaining a school ten months in a year, should draw more public money than another district, having the same number of scholars and keeping but six months in the year. Yet such is seldom if ever the case. It will become evident to every one on consideration, that a short school, in the same district, will average more scholars than a long one; and as a consequence, the less school a district has beyond the amount required by law, the more public money it will draw. Some two or three of our districts have discovered this fact, and have this spring voted but six months school during the coming year, instead of seven to nine months as formerly.

It is earnestly hoped that the attention of our law-makers will be directed to this subject, and that the *very small* school fund which we have shall be divided to the districts in proportion to their *real merits*, thereby becoming *stimulus for good*, instead of being a cause for that numerous class of our citizens who are fifty years behind the times to conspire in depriving the rising generation of that great blessing—the privilege of a full attendance upon common schools.

DANIEL H. MACOMBER, *Essex.*

---

I have to report the entire absence of outline maps, dictionaries, or other books of reference, in the common schools under my supervision. In my opinion, the benefit to be derived from their use in common schools can hardly be overrated, but people have not yet had their minds awakened to the subject; and I know of no more effectual way of doing so than for the Board of Education to take some action in the matter and bring it before the minds of the people.

One great deficiency in our schools, is a want of thoroughness in teaching: and this want is to be attributed, in many cases, to a lack of the proper means for a thorough course of instruction. There is also another fault with teachers, which should be remedied, if possible, viz., a refusal to attend the public examination. Now I take it that the object of this clause in the law was, to give the people an opportunity to judge

of the qualifications of those applying for certificates, and yet, during the past two years that I have performed the duties of Superintendent of Schools, out of thirty-four schools taught in town during the time, only five teachers have attended the public examination. They choose to pay the fifty cents bonus rather than be publicly examined. If the law could be so modified as to compel teachers to attend the examination, or lose the opportunity of teaching, I think it would have a good effect upon the teachers of our common schools.

O. H. ELLIS, *Huntington.*

---

The present law of the State in relation to common schools works well, and gains friends. Its opposers are modifying their opposition. The fruits of the law are beginning to be seen, and as they manifest themselves they must command respect. But something is needed to give to our school laws greater vitality and force. The best laws ever framed will be of no use unless sustained and *vitalized* by warm sympathising hearts and strong hands. Evidently they are not endowed with a self-executing power. They cannot walk, or speak or work without help. Now the help which they need should be furnished. They do not need the aid of indifference, they have had this already too long. It is painful to see what indifference is often manifested respecting common schools. It is some times seen that even parents are cursed with this spirit of indifference. They are so far gone that the application of the galvanic battery would almost fail to produce any sensation. It is true, they may speak very well of schools, but when invited to visit them, they will manifest a wonderful ability in framing excuses for not accepting the invitation. They may at times look into the schoolhouse through the windows, but are very shy of the door, especially when the school is in operation. They never gladden the heart of their dear children, and stimulate them to higher effort, by their presence in the schoolhouse. To break up and destroy this terrible indifference, which may be found in some localities, respecting schools, I have found it useful to go out and talk to the people, in their various schoolhouses, on the importance of taking hold in earnest, and of doing all that can be done for the efficiency and usefulness of their schools. During fourteen years of labor, without any intermission, as a Superintendent of common schools, in a neighboring State, I found it interesting and useful to visit all the schoolhouses, (not in the day time, but in the evening,) and to do what could be done to create an interest in behalf of schools. There is no difficulty in getting the families of a neighborhood together. All will come together with a rush to hear what can be said respecting schools. In this way a vast amount of good can be accomplished. True, it requires labor and a self-sacrificing spirit; but it is labor in the right direction. It is doing good. If it does not pay in dollars and cents, it pays in something more precious and valuable, and makes a man feel that he is not a blank in the world, but is living to do good, and that when he dies he will live forever in the hearts and characters of others.

The Superintendents of Schools have a very important and responsible work to perform. Under the present law, they can work with interest and efficiency—can magnify their office—can visit every school district in the State with light and peace —can build fires that will burn brighter and *purer* till every man, woman and child shall become *deeply* interested in common schools.

CALEB B. TRACY, *Jericho.*

---

In looking back but three or four years, I believe it may safely be said that there has been a gradual advancement in the schools of this town. The houses are kept in better condition, and the scholars are more orderly and studious. The discipline is becoming more kind and parental, and the scholars study more from love and good will, and less from fear and restraint. There is also more of the "Drill" in our schools. This is as important in the common school as in the army; and a teacher is valuable and successful (other things being equal,) just in proportion as he is skillful in drilling his pupils. I am also inclined to believe that if there is not more sympathy for teachers, there is more forbearance towards them on the part of the proprietors of our districts; that the number is diminishing who find fault, without cause, or without a knowledge of the facts in the case, and that the feeling is on the increase, that, to have harmony in the schoolhouse there must be harmony in the *District.* The task imposed upon scholars has also been better proportioned to their capacities, and while less space has been passed over, the actual attainment has been greater. More attention has been paid to the manners and morals of the scholars, and there has been

a manifest improvement in their language and social intercourse. And finally, small scholars have been treated in our schools with more tenderness, more in accordance with their moral and physical natures. For the accomplishment of these improvements, I have had the hearty co-operation of most of the teachers under my supervision, for which I tender them my sincere thanks.

*Common Schools—common schools!* What a name, what an institution! For the want of these in one portion of our country, our national existence is this moment imperiled; blood and treasure are being poured out without stint and without measure; hearts all over our land are throbbing with anguish, and the sensibilities of the whole nation are surging with hope and fear. Ye fathers and mothers, ye Christian parents, in this day of darkness and agony, fail not to take the Common School to your bosoms and bear it *onward* and *upward* as the palladium of our Liberties.

G. W. RANSLOW, *Milton.*

---

I have but little to say as regards our school system, having, in former reports, expressed my opinion rather freely. But there is one fact for which I am not able to account, viz., the very poor attendance at school of the children of foreign parents. I have made repeated inquiries, and the invariable answer has been that they cannot afford to pay the tax for wood and board, which, in this town, is generally raised upon the scholar. But knowing several instances where the tax was raised upon the Grand List, and also where, by vote of the districts and by private generosity, the offer of schooling free of charge to poor children has been offered, and having seen no difference in the attendance, I am at a loss for a reason.

ROBT. J. WHITE, *Shelburne.*

---

Having recently come into Vermont, I am unable to compare our schools during the present with previous years. Of our twelve schoolhouses, seven were good before, one has been thoroughly rebuilt during this year, two are poor, and two shameful.

The most serious practical difficulty I have met during the year, beyond those which grow out of the general indifference of the people to the claims of the common schools, has been to secure a general compliance with the law requiring teachers to obtain certificates *before the commencement* of their schools. In accordance with your advice, I have in some cases examined teachers whose term of service was nearly completed. It still seems to me that a strict construction of the law not only does not require, but rather forbids, the examination of teachers *after* their schools have commenced. The law says, "No examination of teachers shall be held at any other time or in any other manner, except in the discretion of the Superintendent and for the accommodation of teachers *prevented by sickness or other unavoidable circumstances from attending at the regular public examination.*" While providing a private examination for those who are positively *unable* to be present at the public examination, this does not seem to me to contemplate that in *any* case the examination should be *after the school has commenced.* It is expressly provided that a contract made without certificate obtained *before the school commenced*, shall be null and void—and made the express duty of the Selectmen to recover from prudential committees all monies paid without certificate so obtained. Does not then the Superintendent who examines a teacher when his school is nearly finished, contravene the plain intent of the law? Why should he assist the teacher to obtain a certificate in an illegal manner—a certificate which no Court will recognize as enabling the teacher to collect his wages? The decision of the Supreme Court referred to in your note to me, as implying that examinations were admissible after school was commenced, in the fact that a teacher could collect wages for the portion of the time remaining after a certificate was given, I suppose to be the decision reported in Sect. 5, appendix of your 4th Annual Report, in which case the failure to obtain a certificate before the school was opened occurred *by request of the Superintendent* and not through neglect on the part of the teacher. There was a virtual compliance with the law. In the case of the teacher who applies for an examination when his school is nearly completed, there is no virtual nor actual compliance with the law, but an entire and very injurious disregard of it. Ignorance of the law is often pleaded for the neglect, but then the Prudential Committee is at fault in not informing the teacher of the fact that a certificate is a pre-requisite, and the consequences should fall upon him. I find in this town a very considerable ignorance on the part both of teachers and Prudential Committees, of the fact that a certificate is pre-requisite to the existence of a legal school, and from

this cause I ventured, in my note to you, the suggestion that this fact be given a prominent place upon the Register.

Is there any *remedy* in case the Selectmen decline to perform the duty enjoined upon them in Sect. 61, appendix of your 3d Annual Report?

The lessons of the times have suggested to me the fact which will have come to you from many sources, that our schools, whether of the primary or higher grades, fail to impart to those who are soon to be citizens, a knowledge of the principles which underlie our national government, or of the various machinery through which it acts and to which every citizen bears a relation. No child should pass out from our common schools without having been taught the duties and powers belonging to each department of the government, the relation of the Federal to the State authorities, and especially the nature and importance of the duties devolved on each private citizen.

J. W. HOUGH, *Williston.*

---

The schools in this town the past year, have been tolerably successful, perhaps an improvement upon those of the preceding year. More care has been exercised in the selection of teachers, consequently the mode and measure of instruction and the government of the schools have improved.

*Manner of Instruction.*—This, in my opinion, is generally too mechanical. Too many teachers seem to think that if pupils can recite by rule, can give the answer as found in the book, can do a problem by rule, this is sufficient, whether they can make an application of the rule to any practical problem out of the book or not. But is it enough? Is it not the teacher's duty to teach the scholars to think for themselves, not only with the book but without it? Not mere *words*, but a thorough understanding of *principles* should be taught. It is not the amount which the pupil goes over that makes the scholar, but that which he acquires.

*Tardiness and Irregularities.*—These continue to be most grievous evils, though there is a perceptible improvement on the past, in some of the districts. In one district the instances of tardiness were 433, and of dismissals 140! But worse still is the irregularity of attendance. It is impossible to estimate the injurious consequences of this pernicious practice, not only upon the scholar himself, but upon the class and the school—the loss of interest, the discouragement, the disorder and perplexity thus arising. Parents are the ones to blame in this matter, as they are for a good share of the shortcomings of the schools; and with them is the remedy. Will they apply it? Judging the future by the past, we can scarcely hope that they will very speedily.

Among other evils may be mentioned the apathy, indifference and neglect of parents in visiting the schools, in encouraging and sustaining the teachers, and in resisting that carping and complaining spirit which sometimes prostrates the success of the school and the reputation of the teacher—the decrease of parental authority and the increase of the spirit of "Young America," which render good government next to impossible; the selection for Prudential Committees of those whose chief anxiety about the school is that their own pockets may be touched as lightly as possible.

If we have many incompetent teachers, whose is the fault? I unhesitatingly assert that the whole beginning and chief share of the blame for not having such schools as we ought, lies at the door of parents; that they *can* have good schools if they *will;* and until they do their own duty in the premises, I would say to them, "Physician, heal thyself."

GEO. W. HARTSHORN, *Canaan.*

---

The following is a brief synopsis of a *few* of the leading particulars relative to our schools the past year. During the year we have employed twenty-seven different teachers—eleven male and sixteen female teachers. The former have taught twenty-five and one-fourth, and the latter sixty-four and a half months. The average wages paid teachers of summer schools, was $6.10 per month. The female teachers of the winter schools received, on an average, $8.42 cents per month, and the male teachers $15.44. The medium length of both summer and winter schools was 10¼ weeks. The number of pupils attending summer schools was 270, (the same as last year,) with an average attendance of 86 per cent. There were 334 scholars attending the winter schools, (last year the number was 360,) with an average daily attendance of 296, or 88½ per cent. The aggregate expenses for teachers wages, board, fuel and incidentals, has been a little rising of $1400, or $5.50 to each scholar attending school in town during the year, estimated according to the average attendance.

Two commodious, pleasantly located and well-finished schoolhouses have been erected in town during the past year; one in a district with a Grand List of some $100, the other in a new district whose Grand List is only about $75, showing what may be accomplished by energy and determination in a good cause.

One of the most decided and substantial evidences of our educative progress as a town, is seen in the more general and increasing interest in relation to our common schools which is yearly developing itself. Your Institutes, together with the lesser instrumentalities of county and town Teachers' Associations are exerting a salutary influence, in awakening public sentiment to the importance of our schools; and by promoting a more cordial feeling and co-operation between teachers, parents and pupils, lead to a union of effort for their advancement.

One of the greatest, if not the very greatest "helps" that we as a State demand most emphatically, are active, thorough, energetic, wide-awake, practical teachers of our common district schools. Not alone those who possess a fair degree of book knowledge, but *much more*, those whose minds are so disciplined, and their capacity for teaching such, that the training they may give their pupils will fit them for the active duties of coming life.

We believe that the State should establish in every County an Institution for teachers, in which they could be specially trained and educated for teaching the common district school; the teachers for these institutions to be selected from the very best common school teachers of the State, subject to rigid examination as to their real, practical qualifications for teaching children and youth, and these institutions to be holden for a term of weeks both spring and fall. And the law should make it obligatory upon every teacher, before they could engage in teaching, that they should attend this school for a sufficient length of time to receive a license from the Principal, which license should be good for a term of years, and entitle the receiver to teach in any common school of the State;—any one desiring to become a teacher who was too poor to defray the entire expenses, to have his (or her) tuition paid by the County, by his (or her) giving a sufficient guaranty to teach at least one year in the County.

We already have a goodly number of Academies and select schools, but they do not fill the place designed by such an institution as we are speaking of, their business being to teach young men and women for almost any other sphere; else why is it that so many who are there known as the first scholars, have so little practical knowledge of that which they need most to know to become successful common school teachers. What the necessities of our common schools demand, are living, active, practical teachers of the rudiments of knowledge, so that the boys and girls of Vermont may "graduate" at the district school as thorough practical scholars in all the branches there taught, as do the members of the learned professions from their respective Alma Maters.

J. E. WOODBURY, *Concord.*

---

Our schools have been more prosperous this year than ever before since I have known anything about them. Thoroughness has been a marked characteristic of them. Our teachers—all but two—have had a long experience in teaching,—were wide-awake, energetic and practical. Most of our recitations have been conducted without the aid of text books, and many of our "young heads" are as practical and well acquainted with the fundamental principles as our teachers were a few years ago. Certificates have been withheld from several that I considered incompetent, which has had a good effect. We never shall have competent teachers until Superintendents determinedly insist upon it.

You will see that there is a large number of scholars who do not go to school at all. I suppose it is so throughout the State. Can we not have a law to compel them to go?

I place such a value upon *statistics* that I cannot make a decent report to the town without the registers, and take the trouble to collect them for that purpose, and I report everything to the town that I do to you. Some who were the most inveterate haters of the Registers two years ago, are now thinking that they are indispensable. Our schools are always done before March meeting. Can we not have our Registers returned sooner, and thus do away with the returns under the old law? I reported at Town Meeting 2412 tardinesses, and that, if a stranger should go to the Clerk's office, he would find every man's name enrolled that was always behind his business engagements, tardy, slack and lazy, and was bound to chain the same curse upon his children, for against their names, every morning, was put a mark that branded them as certain as the spot does the leopard. And by statistics gathered from our merchants, reported that our tobacco tax is a hundred dollars higher than the whole cost of our schools, and the expense of tea more than doubles yearly, and if our drug tax could be used for one

year only, in building nice, neat, comfortable schoolhouses, every old, time-cursed hovel would be swept from the land.

The Institutes and Associations (both Town and County,) that spring up in their wake, are doing much to awaken and enlighten the public mind.

Can't there be something done to procure some apparatus for our schools, if nothing but a Globe and Outline Maps? A little legislation in this way might help the matter.

People are beginning to think that if there is a failure in school, in most cases, the Committee or Superintendent is responsible for it, and pretty correctly too.

CHARLES W. KING, *Lunenburg.*

---

There has been one schoolhouse completed in town during the present year, and it is decidedly an improvement upon the schoolhouses in this vicinity. Some of our schools have not been all that was desirable; others have been truly commendable, such, I believe, as would do honor to almost any town in the State. And as a whole, I consider them an improvement upon any previous year.

All of our teachers but one, have had some previous experience, and have generally manifested an earnest desire for an improvement of their pupils, and have been quite successful in imparting a living active earnestness, to those under their care.

You will see by my returns that there has been a lamentable indifference on the part of Prudential Committees. With one solitary exception, no one of them has been near the schools they have put in operation, to judge for themselves of their merits. As our Committees are generally parents, having children attending school, it is very difficult for me to find a sufficient apology for such neglect. If this class of individuals are not interested enough to visit our schools, we can hardly expect others to be. Another point I will mention, not so much for the purpose of censuring the past, but hoping that it will encourage improvement in the future, and that is, but one of our teachers, for the past year, has ever attended a Teachers' Institute. I believe that those teachers who have never availed themselves of this privilege, are not sufficiently aware how much they are losing, or in other words, how much practical information may be obtained by so doing.

GEO. A. APPLETON, *Victory.*

---

I herewith send you my report of the state of schools in Fairfield for the past year. I am aware that my answers to your questions are not perfectly accurate; but they are as nearly so as I have been able to make them. It has cost me a great deal of labor to bring my statements to such a measure of correctness as I hope I have reached.

Two days were appointed for the public examination of teachers, at the time prescribed by law. Few, however, attended on those occasions, and consequently most of the certificates were granted after an examination in private. The citizens, if I may judge from their non-attendance, felt but little interest in the matter. It is much to be regretted that a greater proportion of the teachers cannot be brought to submit to the ordeal of a public examination, and that parents and committees are not more careful to ascertain whether the teachers, whom they employ, are fitted for their work. The qualifications of those whom I have examined, have been, as was to be expected, considerably diversified. Some exhibited attainments of a very respectable order, while others were not so well prepared to instruct the young as they should have been. Probably, however, they were the best that could be obtained by the districts in which they were to teach. Committees that can offer but a small compensation to their teachers, must generally take such as they can find, without being very particular respecting their qualifications; and it is to be feared that, in some instances, one of the strongest recommendations which a teacher can present, is that he is willing to accept of small wages.

My relation to the schools of this town has given me the opportunity of forming an opinion of the manner in which they are conducted, and of noticing many things in respect to which an improvement is necessary. I am well aware, however, that to point out defects, is much easier than to tell how they may be remedied. I find that the condition of the schoolhouses, throughout the State, is a very general subject of complaint among the Superintendents of the different towns; and I am sorry to say that Fairfield can claim no superiority in this respect. Many, perhaps I might say most of the schoolhouses are not in a proper state of repair, and are but poorly furn-

ished with such conveniences as are necessary to render them inviting, or even moderately comfortable. As for anything like taste or ornament, that is wholly out of the question. Some of our schoolhouses are in such a state of dilapidation as to be quite unfit for the purpose to which they are appropriated; and it seems surprising that parents should be willing to have their children shut up in such places during the cold months of winter, when, as in many instances is the case, the districts are so well able to provide suitable accommodations for them. There is not, I believe, a set of Outline Maps, a Globe, a Thermometer, or a Clock belonging to any district in the town. In most of them there is a black-board, of greater or smaller size; but my impression is, that in some of the schools not much use is made of it; I may, however, be mistaken.

A grand and very general defect in the mode of teaching, as it has struck my mind, is the want of thoroughness and accuracy. The teachers do not, with sufficient decision, require that the scholars shall prepare themselves fully and carefully for their recitations. In reading, for instance, I have heard a class of children go over quite a number of pages in a single lesson, but in such a manner that it was somewhat difficult to tell whether it was the teacher or the pupil that was reciting. If a tenth part of what was read at once, had been assigned as a lesson, and the scholars had been required to prepare it thoroughly, their real improvement would have been immeasurably greater. Similar remarks might be made in regard to other branches of study.

Most of our teachers have had but little experience in their work;—they have no design to make teaching a profession for life; their compensation does not, except very indirectly, depend on their success in promoting the improvement of their pupils; they have their pay whether their scholars have been many or few, and whether they have been faithful or remiss in their efforts for the good of those under their care. It can easily be seen that these circumstances must have their influence in preventing the efficiency of our schools, and that, until they are in some way obviated, all legislation for the advancement of the interests of education among us will be but partially successful.

It has appeared to me that one very important means of securing the efficiency of our common schools, has been, in a great measure, overlooked in this State, and that is a liberal and generous support of our higher seminaries of learning. It is, I believe, a firm persuasion among those who are most competent to form a correct judgment on the subject, that the influence which is necessary to advance the interests of education among the masses of the people, must emanate from the College. But Vermont, in her educational policy, seems to be acting out the fable of the Stomach and the members of the Body; she starves the former, and wonders why the latter, notwithstanding all her care of them, and all the money expended on them, are still weak and languishing. Let her be persuaded to try the other plan, and see whether it will not be more successful than that which she is now pursuing;—let her foster her Colleges, and see whether they will not, in return, prove *Alma Maters* to her common schools.

JAMES BUCKHAM, *Fairfield.*

---

The schoolhouses of this town will compare favorably with other towns. They have not much pretension to elegance, but are substantial and convenient. There seems to be an increased and laudable interest manifested by parents and committees in schools; and with few exceptions, the teachers have been persons of intelligence, who have done their duty with a zeal and faithfulness which has given general satisfaction.

My decided opinion is, that the whole school expense should be defrayed by a tax on the Grand List.

S. L. WILSON, *Fletcher.*

---

A decided progress has been made in the schools in this town the past year. There has been better order maintained, and a good degree of regularity in attendance. In some of the districts a large proportion of the parents have visited their schools. Teachers and Clerks have been more faithful in keeping the Registers. But while our schools have made good progress, it seems to me there are yet a few defects in the present law, which, if remedied, would increase its utility.

The manner in which our schools are supported is a serious drawback. If a bridge is to be built or a road opened in any of the districts, the town does it. When a schoolhouse is needed why should not the town build it, and, as in other cases, tax the inhabitants therefor? I believe it would be sound economy to defray the expenses of

teachers' wages by a tax upon the whole town, and make it imperative on the districts to keep a school six months at least, during the year, in order to derive any benefit from the public funds. This method would aid small and feeble districts, and have a tendency to lessen the number of such districts as well as to secure teachers of competency. The idea that a teacher of inferior attainments and years, is competent to teach in a district remote from the village, seems to be erroneous and injurious to the advancement of education. Ignorance can be better tolerated any where else than in the teacher. The back-woods district requires just as good qualities in a teacher as any other.

A. M. BUTLER, *Franklin.*

---

We have had some model teachers, and consequently, some excellent schools in town during the past year. But one great and lamentable defect—a want of thoroughness—I have noticed to some extent in all the summer and winter schools. A poor and wicked policy it is, surely, to allow pupils to turn over leaves without gaining knowledge;—knowledge that shall make a more abiding impression on the mind, than a ship does upon the water. Time, money, discipline and progress,—all are lost in no small degree by a want of thoroughness. Who then shall estimate the value of thorough instruction? I believe that Superintendents can do much towards securing such instruction by distinctly calling the attention of teachers, at the semi-annual examinations especially, and elsewhere, to its vast importance. There were 289 persons in all who visited the schools in this town during the year; a fair average perhaps, yet not one half of these were parents. In other words, not two parents to a district visited their schools. Whilst no farmer keeps a man without examining his work; whilst no house-wife keeps a servant without knowing her qualities;—the work and qualities of those whose labor tends not to multiply dollars, but to educate mind, the lord of matter,—the work and qualities under whose care are the prospective leaders of church and State;—is it possible that the work and qualities of *such* a class are so slightly regarded! As parents love their children, their progress and destiny—they should look more to their teachers and schools.

There is not a thermometer, a globe or outline map in a single school room that I visit. Now, although common sense will tell one when he is too warm or too cold, yet it seems to me that the indicator of temperature as well as the indicator of time, is very desirable in a school room. As to globes and maps, wherever they are used, we find the strongest argument in their favor.

We have no beautiful and inviting school yards,—a general fact in Vermont, which the advancing taste of her sons and daughters will soon, we trust, effectively regard.

A simple work on Anatomy and Physiology, in my opinion, should be studied by those who attend our common schools; at present I know of no school room where anything of the kind can be found.

I have succeeded in supplying every school district in town with a library. Over 2000 districts more in the State are in want of the same thing. May they not have it?

C. P. STIMETS, *Highgate.*

---

Our schools, for the past year, have gone on about as usual. The aggregate number of weeks, in which instruction has been actually given, is not quite so great—probably owing to the war—as it has been some previous years.

It is noticeable, that our common schools are steadily changing; and I hope in some respects for the better. They are now taught by females, to a much greater extent than formerly. Males have been employed in this town, during the past year, only about one-fifth of the time in which schools have been maintained. In this there is gain in at least two directions. Many, who would not otherwise be so well occupied, are called into a sphere of active labor honorable to themselves and useful to others. Again a woman is ordinarily better adapted than a man to take charge of the smaller children, and often, other things being equal, even of the more advanced; especially is this the case, when she is properly qualified by education to give such instruction as may be needed.

I am very happy to notice more instances, than ordinary, of what I have long been in the habit of recommending, viz., the continuous employment of the same teacher in a district for a succession of seasons. This is a matter of considerable importance, looked at simply in an economical point of view, and is no doubt too much lost sight of in most quarters. A change, which is not for the better, is usually undesirable.

One other point, perhaps, demands a passing word. As you are aware, a graded Union school has been recently established here. Thus far it appears to work admirably. I have heard no fault found with it, and the system seems to give very general, if not universal satisfaction. The saving secured by grading, though the beginning is only just made, is already observable, and must always be deserving of consideration. The benefits, also, which are likely to result from the bringing of those only together in the same school-room, who are of like age, are not a few. There are, of course, many other advantages which the most superficial observer cannot fail to notice, and to which it is needless to refer.

J. B. PERRY, *Swanton.*

---

In my official report to the people of the town, I speak to them in this wise respecting their want of interest in the education of their children, as evinced in the location and surroundings of their schoolhouses.

They are generally located as near the highway as they well can be, if not in it, and no room is secured for shade trees and shrubbery, so as to render the place pleasant and attractive; yet here children are to spend more of their wakeful hours during twelve or fifteen years of their early life than elsewhere, still a more bleak and desolate place could not well be found. The schoolhouse is the people's college, and should not be turned off as if it was the people's desert. Let the grounds be enlarged, and each family should plant its trees, mingling evergreens with the maple, elm and beech, and they will be living memorials of their good taste, and of the love they have for the rising generation. A little expense and labor would furnish for our schoolhouses a beautiful shade in the summer, and in the winter a protection against the piercing blast. How different would our associations have been with the schoolhouse of our childhood, if love's work had thus surrounded it. Now, the very thought of those sultry hours we spent on those barren grounds, well nigh starts the perspiration in dead of winter, and brings back that old sense of suffocation which afflicted us. No wonder that the little ones often imbibe a dislike for the place, and that this dislike is transferred to books and learning. A little expense and labor would render the place so pleasant and attractive as to produce an entire change of our early associations; and the increased interest children would take in their studies, and the increased rapidity with which they would advance in them, and the good taste such surroundings would tend to cultivate, would more than pay for all the expense and labor. I am sorry to say that the majority of our schoolhouses within, are not much more attractive than the grounds around them.

C. B. CADY, *Alburgh.*

---

I might report briefly, perhaps, the condition of our schools in this town, and the working of our vigorous, but rather complicated school system. During the summer term our schools were very well conducted, and well attended. I visited them twice during the summer, and so far as a Superintendent has the means of judging, should say that there is a decided improvement in all of them. Indeed, I think they were all that any one interested in them could desire. The winter schools were, perhaps, equally well conducted, but owing to other circumstances, were not all attended with equal benefits. Sickness, bad travelling, and want of interest had nearly broken up two of them, and for a greater part of the term, only a very few scholars attended. In the other schools this interruption was only temporary, and they were well sustained to the close. So far as my observation has extended, I believe the schools in this place, under the energetic measures which the State, and more particularly the Board of Education have put forward, are making very perceptible improvement; and it seems to me that if the system could be divested of some of its complications, and yet secure the objects sought, a great advance would be made in common school education.

W. P. HALL, *South Hero.*

---

Right influences work silently but surely through society. Your public discussions, Institutes, and Lectures, are doing a good work for us. They begin to bring forth legitimate fruit. Our wealthy and thoughtful citizens are disposed to make the most of our present school system. The smaller districts begin to agitate the question of uniting together. Better schoolhouses and teachers are felt to be a want. More interest is manifested on the part of citizens in visiting and looking after the teachers and schools.

During the last year, one district has built a neat and tasteful schoolhouse.

EDWIN WHEELOCK, *Cambridge.*

No teacher should be engaged by the Committee until licensed. The contrary is much practiced here; and is some times embarrassing to all concerned. In my report to the town, I cautioned the Prudential Committee against this practice.

To this end, I will hold my forthcoming examination on the 2nd day prox., so that all teachers may be licensed at a day sufficiently early to give committees ample opportunty.

Registers have come in with less perfectness or completeness than I wish, and to secure a more complete return next spring, I will superintend the filling out of the several Registers as I go from school to school.

Should not district Clerks during the coming year receive a moderate compensation for their work, and would it not stimulate them to greater faithfulness? The teachers are more faithful in their part of the Registers than either committees or clerks.

Our teachers during the winter have been mostly females; and the average good has been much higher than when men taught these schools. The truth is, sir, women are, as a class, better students, better teachers, are more conscientious, and have a far deeper sense of their responsibility, both to God and society, than our sex can boast. And hence I encourage the employment of the woman in preference to the man, in all schools, winter and summer, and but for the "carrying and fetching" the young women night and morning, in the winter season, the districts here would now prefer woman to man schools in winter.

JAMES DOUGHERTY, *Johnson.*

---

After a year's careful observation I am more fully aware of the work necessary to be done to give our schools a respectable rank among others in N. E. I am encouraged, however, as the people generally regard my efforts with favor. This did not so fully appear till the annual Town meeting, when my report was presented. In this the true condition and prospects of the schools are exhibited. The report was received with favor, and the town with much unanimity, voted to have it printed in pamphlet form for the use of the inhabitants. The Superintendent was re-elected. These are regarded as signs of progress, and others may be mentioned.

The erection of a commodious and convenient school house after the close of the summer term in one district, was one means of awakening an interest in education and school affairs in this and an adjoining district, and in some degree, with other means, through the town. These two districts secured the services of competent and experienced female teachers, and by the faithful co-operation of all concerned, excellent schools were maintained. A reading circle was organized in these districts which met alternately in each district one evening a week. The exercises consisted of singing, reading, recitations, declamations, criticisms, remarks and addresses. The citizens participated in these exercises, and the good effects were obvious.

These schools closed with an examination occupying one-half day each. Examinations have not generally been observed. It is believed that when properly conducted they may be highly useful. They are beneficial in furnishing an occasion for a gathering at the school house; and such meetings are generally needed. And once let the custom be established of visiting the schools at examinations and at other times, and desirable results will follow.

## EXTRACTS FROM REPORT PRESENTED TO THE TOWN.

*Public Examinations.* These would be much more efficient and useful if more generally attended by teachers and prudential committees. They afford the Superintendent an opportunity to present some general views in regard to methods of teaching and the management of school. Teachers who love their calling—and no others should be retained—may find these gatherings pleasant, mutually interesting and profitable. Teachers should not suppose that because they have once received a certificate they need not longer strive for a better preparation, because, if our schools improve, there must be a corresponding improvement by teachers or they will be liable to rejection.

*Irregularity of attendance.* The loss of a month's education is a loss not only to the child but to the community, which cannot be repaired. Hence no child should be deprived of the right of attending school for a single day for a trivial cause, and yet

The *morals* of scholars are not always properly cared for. I am not certain that that the neglect is not by far too general. The fault lies in this; that the habits of the scholars, in their social intercourse, is not properly looked after by the teacher. Should not a teacher watch the habits of children in all school associations as nearly as possible, with the same sleepless vigilance, and kind-hearted tenderness that a judicious parent would do!

Many children in town have been kept from school many days, we think, without sufficient reason, I think of no valid reason, except sickness, absolute physical disability. In some few instances, children have been kept from school because the teacher saw fit to punish some children of the same family. Parents should be exceedingly careful on this point. If the punishment be of such character that the parent cannot approve, it would be far better to continue sending to the school, and thus not inflict a greater injury on the children, one which no subsequent benefits or efforts can fully repair.

*Singing in School.* An effort has been made to introduce singing into the schools during the past winter. In two of the schools it has been introduced with marked success. And these schools are as good as any in town. It is by no means necessary that the teacher should be able to take the lead in this exercise in order that it may be introduced. In some of our schools we find scholars who are able to lead in singing. Children are fond of music and singing. In a school of 25 or 30 scholars, I observed that nearly all present endeavored to join in singing. And no one, if he has any music in his soul, could witness such an exercise as this without being convinced that it has a refining, moral and happy influence upon children. Unnecessary and unimportant as some may regard this, there is, perhaps, nothing more necessary than efforts "to refine and educate the moral elements of character of which so many children stand so much in need at the present day." The exercise and attraction of singing would, perhaps, hasten some tardy boys and girls and they would probably be more willing to remain till the close.

JOSHUA BRITTON, *Bradford.*

---

Few if any of the appliances of society exert an equal influence on its future destiny as do our common school. It seems to me, therefor, that the wealth of the State should as truly support its public schools, as its government. Hence, that all the money raised therefore, should be on the Grand List.

Although to dwell on the many excellencies of our schools is much more pleasant than to speak of defects, perhaps the former may be increased by a just perception of the latter. The following are among the more prominent which have arrested my attention.

The *morals* of scholars are not always properly cared for. I am not certain that the neglect is not by far too general. The fault lies in this; that the habits of the scholars, in their social intercourse, are not properly looked after by the teacher. Should not a teacher watch the habits of children in all school associations as nearly as possible with the same sleepless vigilance, and kind-hearted tenderness that a judicious parent would do?

In some of our schools the Scriptures have not been read, as a devotional service. Whatever may be said of other devotional services, it appears to me that no teacher is prepared to exert a wholesome moral influence who has not enough regard for the relations sustained to the Creator, to at least have the Scriptures read in a devotional form, either by himself or the scholars. I would prefer that such services be held at the opening of the school, and at so early an hour that any may absent themselves if their rights of conscience are thereby invaded.

The discipline of many of our schools has been defective. In some cases this has resulted from the want of any well defined plan of action; in other words, the absence of a well matured system. By far the greater number, however, have failed through a want of firmness and uniformity in their requirements. Too much talking, fault-finding and scolding, do not constitute any part of good government.

Another prominent defect, has been a want of thoroughness in the rudiments of nearly every department of study. But whilst this defect is everywhere present, I have found it most glaring in reading. I have rarely met with a teacher possessing any clear well-defined notion *how* to teach the first principles of spoken and written language; and a majority of them have not been familiar with the first lessons in the series of reading books used in all our schools.

A want of punctuality on the part of scholars, also greatly damages some of our schools. Absences, tardiness, and dismissals, often render uniform thoroughness almost impossible. Neither parents nor scholars appreciate the truth, that "time once lost never returns, the moment that is lost, is lost for ever."

But though struggling under many discouragements, we still rejoice in "that whereunto we have attained," and each year strive to make a little advancement in the right direction. Thus we hope, hereafter, to reach a much higher eminence than we now occupy.

H. D. HODGE, *Braintree.*

The schools in Brookfield, the past year, have generally been a success. Several of these have been model schools, taught by intelligent and thorough teachers, and efficient disciplinarians. In one district only has there been a failure, and in that case it was not want of talent or scholarship, but what is usually the fact, a want of *tact* in government.

Among the defects in our schools, I may mention first, irregularity of attendance and tardiness. These defects are not, perhaps, more glaring in this town than elsewhere, but they detract very much from the efficiency and improvement of our schools. It can be remedied only by an appeal to *mothers* in respect to the importance of a reform in that particular.

Another general defect to which I would call attention, is a general disposition to *think lightly* of the more elementary branches. Scholars want to get out of the spelling book before thoroughly mastering it. Good spelling and good reading, and a handsome chirography, are, to say the least, equal in importance to Arithmetic, Geography, Grammar, and other more advanced studies. Not that I would in the least depreciate the importance of these, but the foundation should be thoroughly laid in the first place. Sensible of this general defect, and for the purpose of correcting it, in some measure, we have, during the past winter, held several meetings, (educational meetings we have called them,) in different parts of the town, for the purpose of discussing, before teachers, parents and scholars, the importance of paying special attention to those branches. They have been very well attended, and a good degree of interest has been awakened. To stimulate teachers and scholars further in respect to spelling, we proposed to hold a public spelling school at one of the meeting houses. Volunteers from most of the schools took part in it. We raised $17 or $18 to be distributed in prizes. Between 80 and 90 scholars contended for them. It was a successful experiment. Parents were deeply interested, as well as teachers and scholars. Some of the teachers have remarked that the preparation for that exercise was worth to the scholars three or four years of ordinary drill in that branch In this opinion I concur. The influence of this effort on the future of our schools, if I mistake not, will be decidedly beneficial. Its good effects are not confined to the scholars. The parents of some of the scholars that missed, remarked that they would warrant that their children would not miss a word in the spelling book another year.

At the Town Meeting in March, one of the small districts was disbanded and incorporated in other districts. This was one result of the Secretary's address in January.

DAVID PERRY, *Brookfield.*

---

I have been unable to make my statistical returns as correct as I desired, on account of errors and omissions in the reports of some of the district clerks.

Our schoolhouses, with three or four exceptions, are quite good ones, though poorly supplied with apparatus to illustrate the studies taught in them. Outline Maps, Dictionaries, or other books of reference, are seldom met with in the schoolhouses of this vicinity.

The following statistics extracted from my report to the town, will show to what extent the new books have been adopted in this town. In the summer schools there were 290 classes; of these 206 used the books selected by the Board, and of the remaining 84 classes, at least 36 would have been unnecessary had the proper books been provided. If I may be allowed to express my opinion upon the relative merits of these books, I would say, that I regret the very general substitution of Greenleaf's Mental Arithmetics for Colburn's, which has been made within the last two or three years in this town.

Too little attention is paid to United States History in our schools; and I hope, among the good that is to come of the "great evil" of the day, will be a better knowledge of the History and Geography of our country.

There has been considerable improvement in the literary qualifications of our teachers within the past few years, and some improvement in the methods of instruction and the general management of the schools; yet much more needs to be done in this direction. The scholar is not made to understand as he should, the intricate connection of the studies he pursues with, and their application to, the world around him. In short, he needs to become more a student of nature, and less dependent upon text books.

PERLEY CHANDLER, *Chelsea.*

My connection with the schools in town, as Superintendent, dates from the first of last December, by appointment of the Selectmen.

By the minutes of my predecessor, I report success during the summer term, with few exceptions. There are twenty-four organized districts in town, in all of which schools were taught the past winter. Many of the houses are badly located, and not one with playgrounds enclosed. There are nine that are comfortable and convenient, but no model houses. Nine are unfit for scholars to be imprisoned in. Six are not extremely poor, though far from being good. There are too many districts in town, but I am pleased to learn that three districts contemplate dissolution.

There is an increasing interest felt for the advancement of education. Money is raised by a vote of the town on the Grand List in addition to what the law requires for the support of schools. A few districts raise money on the Grand List of the district, but one raises money on the scholar.

The Register induces better attendance, and an improvement generally.

F. P. EATON, *Corinth.*

---

I think there is an improvement in the manner of keeping the Registers; still through the inaccuracies of district clerks and teachers some discrepancies occur. The general result is tolerably reliable. Our schools have manifestly been favorably affected by the operation of the present school law. We trust the law is coming more and more into favor with our people.

It seems to me that the greatest evil in our schools is irregularity of attendance, tardiness and absences. Any encouragement or inducement that would correct this evil would be of great advantage to the general interest of schools. Cannot something be done by way of legislation to affect this matter? Some of our citizens who have no children to send to school, and yet have to pay to support schools, complain sorely to see children running in the street who ought to be in the school room. They are willing to pay, provided the children will attend to their business. Something ought to be done to remedy this very great, and we fear increasing, evil.

H. N. BURTON, *Newbury.*

---

I have now been connected with the schools in Randolph two years, and feel confident in saying that during that time there has been a very decided improvement in the teachers and in the school. Teachers, who, at my first public examination would have been rejected but from the fact that they would not have been competent and well qualified enough to supply the schools, have since, by diligent study and persevering effort placed themselves in rank among the very foremost of Vermont teachers. Some teachers in town during the past year would, I am confident, rank very high among the best teachers in our county.

The Teachers' Institute, held here under your supervision, created a marked enthusiasm among the teachers and friends of education. The good effects were clearly perceptible even in the summer term, which was then well advanced. The people, I think, are generally becoming less inclined to that old notion, that they must have new teachers every term. Some teachers have been kept in the same district several terms in succession. This, I regard as a very important move in the right direction. We cannot expect the greatest good from our schools until there is a greater degree of permanency in teachers. As well might a mistress of a household expect her work well done by exchanging hired servants every six months, as that our schools can prosper with an exchange of teachers every quarter of school. If districts could estimate the value of a good teacher, and the positive injury of a poor one, for a single term, in dollars and cents, they would see that a large profit would accrue to them by retaining the services of a good teacher at what would now be regarded as an exorbitant price.

We have a school association in town, which holds its meetings in the winter season once in two weeks, on Saturday. The forenoon session is exclusively for teachers, in which are discussed freely the principles of studies taught, and the best methods of explaining and teaching them. The afternoon session is for the public, and questions of public interest connected with schools are freely discussed. I think these have been productive of great good.

My intercourse with the people has enabled me to learn pretty fully the prevailing opinions with reference to our schools and school law. I think the general feel-

ing is, that the present law has a good effect upon the schools, though now and then I hear one sighing for the "good old days of Adam and Eve," when "we warn't allowed sich new-fangled notions."

O. D. ALLIS, *Randolph.*

---

It is strange to me why the culture of the youth is so much neglected by the parent at home. It cannot be expected that children uneducated at home, can be educated at school. In the language of one, learned, "That is not education which children receive at school; it is only instruction." Children are educated at home, and in their every day associations; and this education forms the common mind and makes the man, not school instruction. Meagre indeed is the moral culture or education which the scholar receives during the six hours which he spends in a day in the school room with, perhaps, forty or sixty others, while the time of their instructor is absorbed in their school studies. But the law has most wisely imposed the high and solemn duty on all school teachers, to use all diligence in imparting *to*, and impressing *on* the minds of their pupils those principles of morality and virtue which are essential to a useful and honorable life; and without which all literary acquisitions will only add to their guilt and help to cover them with disgrace and shame.

SAMUEL M. GLEASON, *Thetford.*

---

The employment of young and unqualified teachers in our schools is one great reason why the cause of education does not flourish in Vermont as it has in many of her sister States.

Compare the ships in which Columbus sailed with the modern steamers which plough the waves, and you have a faint illustration of the difference between the management and condition of our schools at present, and what they will be when they have arrived to their highest degree of improvement.

It is a matter for rejoicing that the leaders in the cause of education in this State have at length taken a step in the right direction. But the people are very far from appreciating the good results of their untiring efforts to bring the standard of our common schools, in some measure, to compare with the schools in many of the Western States, which are far in advance of us.

C. P. DIVOLL, *Topsham.*

---

The Registers are generally well kept and properly filled out—very much better than heretofore. Teachers begin to appreciate the value of their labor in keeping their Registers, so as to give to the public a correct knowledge of the condition of the schools.

There is an increasing interest plainly seen in our town for the improvement of our common schools. Intelligent persons are giving their attention to the subject by agitating questions relating to government, enlarging districts, building schoolhouses and furnishing them, which, in my opinion, will produce a favorable result. Two new schoolhouses, well arranged, finished in good taste, painted and properly ventilated, were built last summer, and two other districts have voted to build this year, which, considering the hard times, is encouraging to all earnest laborers for the improvement of our common schools.

A. B. DREW, *Tunbridge.*

---

The schoolhouses are not what they ought to be. Some are good, and others are in a poor condition, but by a little expense they could be made more comfortable. We do not expect you to build new and costly houses under the present circumstances, with a heavy State and National debt; but with a little care, we could make our children more earnest to attend school, than we can in cold, unwholesome schoolhouses. The schools in this town for the past year have advanced beyond my expectation. And I will say, on the part of the inhabitants, there is an earnestness manifested for their children to be instructed by the best teachers that could be employed within their means.

The expense of teachers' board by a tax on the Grand List would not be approved by a majority in this vicinity. But in my opinion, and that of the teachers, it would prove beneficial to the schools in the State.

ETHAN DIMOND, *Vershire.*

I think that the people in this town have done very much to affect their schools for the better. During the past school year the Superintendent rejected seven teachers who applied for certificates. He gave considerable of his time to the business of improving the schools in town. If, in the examination of schools, he found teachers incompetent for their task, others were soon found to take their places. In his Report to the town of the condition of the several schools under his charge, he was so irreverent to public feeling, and pounced so desperately upon the various evils connected with our schools, especially those of our *miserable old schoolhouses*, that a few of the people even groaned aloud with dissatisfaction. He was even so bold as to make known the fact that the principal difficulties in the way of the success of our schools, were occasioned by the parents, that many cried out, "Crucify him." But as the result of such unsparing criticisms, he was again almost unanimously elected to take charge of the Washington schools, with full instructions from the people, to "tell the *whole* truth the next year, if it cut them to the quick." Allow me to say, sir, that when the people of any town evince a soreness after the receiving of so well intentioned and severe censure for the culpable neglect of school duties, and manifest a willingness to admit that they truly merited such censure, and call for a future enlargement of corrections, there is an encouraging element within that people, which, if properly improved, will advance their educational interests, and perhaps eventually secure to them the highest and best of school advantages. I am really of the opinion that very many of our Superintendents who are anxious to do much for our common schools, somewhat mistake the nature or duties of their calling. Of all interests that secure the attention of the people, those of our common schools are of the greatest importances. Now, as a general thing, the person chosen to superintend the schools in a town has the confidence of the people, and they naturally entrust the direction and management of their schools to him; and to a certain extent, as he is, so are the schools. If he comes before the people and reports their schools in an excellent and prosperous condition, or does not, but fails to develop their prominent defects, and to speak in a kind, bold and serious manner of their evil effects and deleterious influence upon the growing minds of the children and their own pecuniary interests, he is not only guilty of dereliction of duty, but, to a certain extent, of the thoughtless indifference and insensibility of the people on the real condition of their schools. Although it has been my object during the past two years, to be persistent and attentive to the school interests of the town, I can truly say that one thing which this town needs most, is a more interested, thorough and exacting Superintendent. And what is true of this town may be true of others.

The old system of supporting the board and fuel on the scholar, and of sending the teacher "around," may never be effectually and universally changed throughout the State, except it be by law. If we could be successful in getting the people to see that it is expedient, right and just to support our common schools on the Grand List, it would not be so unless it was *law*. If we have such a law-abiding people in Vermont, give us the law.

We are fully aware that your labors, in connection with your Institutes, are producing an excellent effect upon the school interests of this State. May your life be spared and your energies increased for the great work before you.

GEORGE F. SMITH, *Washington*.

---

I think there has been very great success in our schools, in this town, this year, though we have had a large amount of sickness this winter, which has injured some schools very much. It seems to me their success has been more than one could expect when they see such a lack of interest on the part of parents. Scarcely any district has more than one or two visits from parents, and some, not any. They can go everywhere else, but have no time to visit schools.

H. A. FITZ, *Albany*.

---

In our town one new and neat schoolhouse has been built within the year, and a four months school has been taught in it this winter. This is the second recently built in town. Our schoolhouses are generally called good, though lacking, except in two instances, in suitable play grounds. Some idea of the real excellence of the school buildings may be gathered from the fact that in some cases they are priced at from $100 to $125. (Fine outlay for a home to keep 30 or 40 scholars in for four to six months in the year!)

Much improvement is visible in our schools, as compared with their condition a few years ago. Some districts, however, do not take the interest that we could wish, or that must be taken before our schools can become what they should be, as means of education for the rising generation. Others are taking extra pains to obtain the best teachers, *though the expense is a few dollars more* than if a cheap teacher were employed, believing the time of their scholars to be too valuable, and the expense of keeping them at school too great, to admit of having a poor school at any price.

In my opinion, our schools ought to be wholly supported on the Grand List, and *teachers should have a steady boarding place.* This sending teachers from place to place, from house to house, to get a portion of their board at each, is a serious wrong to them, and ought not to be allowed by Vermont. The evils resulting from this course are numerous and aggravated, and cannot be overbalanced by any benefits believed to attend such arrangements.

D. H. AUSTIN, *Brownington.*

---

You will see by this return, that we have no such things in this town belonging to districts as outline maps, books of reference, dictionaries, globes or clocks. I have said but little about these things, because, except in one schoolhouse we have no place where such articles could be safely kept—indeed, no proper place for a school Register. All our schoolhouses, except one, are old, ill-constructed, uncomfortable and wholly unfit for school purposes.

There is but little said in opposition to the school law. Some think that the visitations of the Superintendent are all unnecessary—that the Prudential Committees visit the schools all that they demand. In this town all of the Committees have "called" into all the schools together, four times.

The experience of another year has abundantly confirmed the statement made in my report last year, that "The school system is working well among us; improving schoolhouses, elevating the qualifications of teachers and the character of schools, and awakening increased interest among the people." We have had decidedly the best schools we ever had in town during the past year; more orderly, more regular and prompt in attendance, notwithstanding the frequent and formidable snow blockades. In one rural and snowy district of 31 scholars, fifteen whose attendance was more than 80 per cent. of the time, had no tardy marks, six had but one each, nine had twenty-nine, one had thirty-four, all the rest of the school but thirty-five. The examination at the close of the school showed there had been interest in study as well as in attendance, as we should naturally expect. Other schools have showed similar interest—the scholars creeping on the drifts to school, when the roads were so blocked up that they could not get there otherwise. Our schoolhouses are all respectable, save one. Most of them have been recently built or repaired in modern style. We hope to build another this year.

A. R. GRAY, *Coventry.*

---

An increased interest has, I think, been manifested in our schools during the year, though as yet it is far from being as lively and heartfelt as the vast importance of the cause demands. But this almost imperceptible change has exerted its legitimate influence upon the schools. With but very few exceptions, the schools have ranked high, and been conducted to the entire satisfaction of the districts. There have been a few failures, but invariably in those districts where divisions have to a greater or less degree previously existed, and it is equally true that the best schools have been in those districts where the greater interest and the better care for both teacher and pupil have been manifested. Nearly all the schoolhouses are good, some of them fine ones; but with only one exception, they do not contain dictionaries, outline maps, globes, or any of those aids and helps which the teacher so much requires, and without which he cannot reasonably be expected to perform his work thoroughly and efficiently. A slight increase in the pay of teachers, shows, too, a change in the right direction, also a corresponding change has been noticeable in the school; while in some the "*grading*" policy has been adopted, and the influence and usefulness of the school has likewise been confined to a narrow and contracted sphere. There is, I am sorry to say, an almost total neglect to visit our schools, but believe the change for the better is gradually coming on. There is a better opinion of the school law and its operations, yet a few, opposed to reform, think there is far too much machinery about it, and that it will not accomplish its object; but those of more liberal views, who have watched its progress closely, believe it is the *true* system and will ultimately work out its design.

As all true reform is slow and gradual in its progress, and brought about by constant, persevering labor, we can but consider these slight improvements which I have mentioned, as indications of that permanent change so greatly needed in the public mind, as harbingers of that ultimate success for which the active friends of popular education have so long and zealously labored.

DAVID M. CAMP, 2ND, *Derby.*

---

During the past year the schools in Glover have been in a prosperous condition. The order secured and the deportment of the scholars have been very good, and the friends of education have expressed their approval of the teachers employed, with a few exceptions.

In my last report, I noticed the fact that two branches of education demanded the special attention of those interested in the welfare of the young, viz:—the study of the History of the United States, and the practice of writing, so as to secure good penmanship. This suggestion was well received, and history classes were formed in several of our schools, and more attention was given to writing, in all of them, than had been given for many years before. The great need now is, that of buildings better adapted to the use of schools. Anything that would lead to interest and to efficient action on this subject would be a blessing.

Another desirable change, would be the doing away of the plan of having the teachers "board around," a practice wearing to the teacher, and absorbing part of that energy which ought to be expended wholly for the good of the schools.

Could these desirable ends be secured in some way, I am sure that our schools need not, under the present arrangement, shun comparison with those of any other State.

S. K. B. PERKINS, *Glover.*

---

In reference to remarks connected with the cause of education in our common schools, I have no striking or important suggestions to offer. I would only in one word advert to a subject, which so far as the range of my observation extends, is wholly, or almost wholly, excluded from a place in the studies of our district schools, but which even a moment's reflection, would suffice to convince my mind, that it is worthy of a prominent place, and should take rank with the subjects to which primary importance is attached. The Geography and History of Vermont, as a theme of study, and of school study, it is one of the most interesting, practical, appropriate and attractive character. It opens the youthful mind to the perception and recognition of the utility and advantages of, and forms to a taste and appreciative relish for more enlarged and universal Geographic and Historic studies. The knowledge of the Geography and History of our commonwealth, should be the starting point whence our pupils set out in all their acquisitions and studies, in this department. This knowledge of our own State, tends to develop and foster, and when acquired in the early and impressible years of opening life, developes and fosters, with incalculable power, all the principles and emotions of a generous and ardent patriotism—one of the noblest, most elevated, and commanding attributes of human character, and good citizenship, and lays the foundation and gives sure support to all that prowess and patriotic service and exertion which a good and loyal citizen can render to the State, and so to the Nation. Yet is not this branch of instruction and study so rich and beneficent in its fruits, so appropriate to a people intrusted with the privileges and responsibilities of Democratic government, most grievously, and we might almost say, totally neglected?

Our chief reason of its omission from any recognised and distinctive place in school studies is, I suppose, the want of any manual of suitable character and convenient size for introduction and use in our common schools. This is a want which should be brought before the leading educators and publishers of our State, that prompt and efficient measures may be taken for its remedy. A more honorable and valuable service could scarcely be rendered to the cause of education, the interests of our youth and the prosperity of our State, than by the preparation and publication of a suitable Text Book. Its production would worthily enlist the largest culture and ripest experience of our most distinguished educators. Nor would the publishers of school books find the publication of such a work a doubtful or unprofitable business enterprise. The profits on sales would be sufficiently and even largely remunerative. Would not a a new edition of Hall's Geography and History of Vermont, with those additions and improvements which its author's veteran experience could easily supply,

perform admirable service, meet the *desideratum* and amply and satisfactorily fill up the existent deficiency?

THOMAS BAYNE, *Irasburgh.*

---

Probably the greatest difficulty the system has to encounter in this town, is the almost hopeless condition of the schoolhouses. Many of them are old and dilapidated, and even those more recently constructed, and intended to be excellent houses, are unfit for the purposes for which they were built. Their design is miserable and their execution worse. It is strange that people will not learn how to build schoolhouses. I think the interest in the cause of common school education is increasing among the parents of this town; but it is still, in some districts, in a feeble state. Some schools in town were not visited by a single parent during the winter term. In spite of these difficulties we have had some excellent schools, which I think was due mostly to the superior teachers placed in them.

While some of the Registers were filled with much care and neatness, others exhibited, very plainly, much ignorance and carelessness on the part of teachers and district clerks.

ROYAL CUMMINGS, *Newport.*

---

The schools in this town show a marked improvement. Four years ago there was not a schoolhouse in town that was at all fit for the use to which it was applied. Now there are four good schoolhouses, and the other districts are agitating the question of building new houses. Wherever the new houses have been built, the increased interest in the schools is very manifest. I think too much cannot be done to make the schoolhouse a place that the children will love. It cannot fail of having a good effect upon their after lives. They should learn to love the beautiful as well as their A. B. C. It costs money, but we are apt to prize that most which costs us most. I consider that a good argument for defraying the whole expense of the school upon the Grand List. No man that paid his tax to board the teacher and furnish fuel would like to see their female teachers wallowing through the snow to and from some remote boarding place, or consent to have a little pile of green wood covered with snow and the bigger boys digging it out and consuming half of the forenoon, perhaps, in getting the fire started, and perhaps before that is accomplished, an axe has been sent for, and a board or rail from some neighboring fence has been impressed into service! No, put the whole thing upon the Grand List, then teachers would have good boarding places; there would be warm schoolhouses, a good woodhouse well filled with dry wood, everybody in the district well satisfied. Those having large lists and no children would feel an interest in the schoolhouse and all that pertained to it,—a warm house because it took less wood, and good dry wood for the same reason. But there is another thing a fixed fact—a principle, from which no man that is a man would wish to dodge,—the property of the country should educate the children of the country. There is no getting away from this; and no man that wishes to tax a poor man, with a large family, to support the school, is a real lover of his country.

CHARLES BLAKE, *Salem.*

---

The schools of our town have prospered the past year, better than any previous year since I have been a citizen of the town.

The practical workings of the school law are felt and seen in our good schools. It is a matter of encouragement to all interested in the subject of education, that we are favored with a school law so practical in its workings, and so beneficial in its results.

The schoolhouses in our town are not as good as they should be, yet the people are waking up in this respect. The people at the South Village have a large and commodious house in process of erection; and other districts are talking strongly of shifting their "old hovels" for new, modern styled schoolhouses. May "God speed the right."

M. F. VARNEY, *Troy.*

---

In six districts in town, the schools have not been visited by the Prudential Committee during the past year. They hired the teachers and set them to work; that was their duty; but was that all? Their own consciences, unless they are sadly perverted, *must answer, No.* The length of time in which schools have been maintained, exceeds

that of the previous year by about eighteen months. Some of the schools have been excellent; others not what they ought to have been, nor what they might have been had the teachers had the active and earnest co-operation of the parents in their labors.

There has been no improvement the past year in the conveniences or comforts of the schoolhouses. The remarks and suggestions made in regard to them, a year ago, are as pertinent now as they were then. So long as these things are neglected, so long the benefits derived from schools will continue to be meagre and unsatisfactory. The irregularity and want of punctual attendance upon the schools are evils which might and ought to be remedied. Many parents seem to think it a matter of no great importance whether a child is regular in attendance upon school or not,—whether he is always prompt and punctual, or uniformly tardy. Nothing detracts more from the efficiency of school, or tends more to discourage and dishearten a teacher than irregularity and tardiness in attendance. It should not be left optional with children whether they will go to school or not. They should be taught at home that it is not only their duty to go, but a privilege they ought to prize.

The great majority of the people fail to realize fully the necessity of the public schools to the life and permanence of the State. Most regard them a very convenient arrangement in which they have no particular interest unless they happen to have children to send. The true principle on which the common school is based, is that of necessity; and every citizen of the State has a direct and personal interest in the well being of its schools. New England's schools have raised her to her present high position. Her citizens are loyal, intelligent and thoughtful. Had the South possessed similar means for the mental and moral culture of all classes, the slave rebellion would never have cast its dark shadow over the land. The strength of our government consists more in the intelligent minds of the people than the muscles of their arms. Republicanism depends on the intelligence of the people; despotism rests upon ignorance.

R. D. KING, *Benson.*

---

I have nothing of special interest to add concerning the schools in this town, more than to say that, as a general thing, they have been well conducted and quite successful, and will, no doubt, compare favorably with those of any other town. But still I am painfully conscious they are not what they ought to be, nor what they might be, if there could only be a more general and abiding interest taken in them by the inhabitants of the town and of the various school districts. Such an interest would make them at once twice as efficient and successful as they now are. It would cure the tardiness and the too numerous dismissals, which now operate so unfavorably upon the school. In my report to the town, I called special attention to this fact, and said that this was a matter that could be corrected only by the parents and guardians of the children—the teacher could here exercise no arbitrary control. I know of no way in which this great evil can be remedied, but by a deepening of the interest which all should feel in the success of our schools. The schoolhouses through the town, with one exception, are in good condition and eligibly located.

I would also suggest that the school Registers be more firmly bound, as they can hardly be made to last in their present condition through two terms of school.

L. MARSHALL, *Castleton.*

---

There has been some advance in the condition of schoolhouses in this town the past year. One new one has been built, and a very neat, convenient and comfortable house it is. Most of the schoolhouses in town are inconvenient, uncomfortable and unhealthy things—not but what they have ventilation enough for health, but it is not within the control of the teacher. In most of them, it is obtained by loose floors, smashed doors, broken windows, cracked ceilings and open roofs. Most of them infringe upon the highways, and none have fenced grounds. With such accommodations the influence upon our scholars is anything but what it should be.

There does not seem to be much interest taken in schools by parents in this town, if visiting schools is an index of their feelings on this subject. I see recorded in the Registers the visits of but two or three parents. All seem to think that if they vote money, hire a teacher and compel their children to attend school, it is all that is required of them. If parents would visit schools more, it would not only stimulate the scholars but the teachers, and make them feel the responsibilities upon them, and that their hands were upheld by those of the parents. Parents would also be better able to judge of the fitness of *their teachers, the* comfortableness of their schoolhouses, and the

progress of their children. If parents in this town were obliged to attend school one day in each week, in most of the schoolhouses in town, we should soon see a great change in them.

WM. O. HARRISON, *Chittenden.*

---

I am aware that from the awkward, and in many instances erroneous manner in which District Clerks have made their returns in the Registers, it is almost impossible to approximate any where near accuracy in returning statistics; and I find, upon comparison of the sums and numbers in this report, that there are many inaccuracies in it. I have, however, followed the Registers, and used them as the foundation of this report. Upon comparison of the reports filed in the Town Clerk's office by District Clerks, last February, and the sworn returns of the same officers in the school Registers, I find there is a variance in the two sets of reports, of over ninety in the number of children between four and eighteen, in town. Also, in one district where I have heard much complaint of high taxes, the District Clerk reports the amount raised upon the Grand List at fifty cents, while in another, we are informed, by the same authority, that the district has raised upon the Grand List, during the year, the enormous sum of seventeen cents.

We have one schoolhouse in town which is an ornament to the district to which it belongs, and two or three more may be regarded as decent, while the remainder are not fit for sheep pens. There does not appear to be sufficient interest taken by parents in the educational progress of their children. The manner which will bring the year around with the smallest outlay of dollars and cents, is regarded as the only feasible plan, and if an individual suggest an idea for the improvement of our schools or schoolhouses, he must demonstrate that it will cost nothing before he can ensure a hearing by the majority of those upon whom rests the responsibility of preparing the rising generation to act their part in their department of human usefulness.

That property should be made the basis of taxation in all cases, I believe to be the true theory. It is not only impolitic but unjust to support governments by a *per capita* tax entirely upon the citizens of such government; and the same principle holds good in the practical working of our school system. The Grand List of the school district is the only basis which should be used in managing the financial affairs of the district. The advocates of raising money to sustain schools by a tax upon the scholar, are yearly growing less in number, and the system itself is fast going into disuse.

I, too, most heartily deprecate the practice of school teachers boarding "around." My experience as a teacher, and my observation as an individual, has fully convinced me that it is a great inconvenience for both the *boarded* and the *boarder*, and has not a single advantage or pleasant feature to redeem it from its disadvantageous and inconvenient consequences, and I hope soon to see that practice, now so prevalent, a subject of history.

When the people will exhibit a suitable taste in the construction and adornment of their schoolhouses, when the vocation of the teacher shall be regarded in the light of a profession, and the development and the progress of the human soul shall assume a higher place in the minds of men than a few paltry dollars, we may expect to see the common schools of our State in the exalted position which their importance deserves.

J. C. BAKER, *Danby.*

---

The Teachers' Institute, held here last spring, has had a beneficial influence upon the citizens as well as the teachers of the town. The suggestions made at that time have been well received by the people, and have waked up an interest in our common schools, seldom if ever, manifested here before, and in most instances, the schools in the several districts in town have been improved by this healthful influence. The attendance upon school meetings in the several districts, is double what it has been in any preceding year, and this interest seems to be *in the scholar* rather than *in the dollar.*

The new school law gains friends, and is doing a good work here. All expenses in the several districts (except what the public money defrays,) are paid by a tax raised on the Grand List.

A new schoolhouse, 45 by 65 feet, has been completed and furnished, in the center district, during the past year; and in its use this fact has been demonstrated, that a convenient and well arranged school room has much to do with the *progress* as well as the health of the scholars.

There is a remissness on the part of the District Clerks in making their returns, which should be remedied. In many items the Superintendent might as well guess at

the figures as to take those given by the Clerk. To illustrate—question No. 15, "State the number of weeks school sustained with other monies than those drawn from the Town treasury," has been answered by only one Clerk in town, and others, of vital importance, are left blank. The way in which many Clerks make their returns, is something after this manner: They sit down in their rooms, figure out what they can from the teachers' answers and guess at the rest, giving as a reason for so doing, "The district refuses to compensate them for their services, and they do not feel disposed to hunt up statistics for nothing." Ought there not to be some sum specified by law which they shall receive as compensation for their services?

J. W. EDDY, *Fair Haven.*

---

We have had some very good schools in town the past year. The most and the best have been taught by females. Good female teachers seem to lend a good moral tone to their schools and scholars, not imparted by male teachers, especially such young men as can be procured in rural districts, where the Grand List is small, and public funds in a corresponding state.

I think the law, in regard to the support of schools, gives good satisfaction in this town. In fact, I think it better to have it remain as it is. There are in many districts wealthy men, that constitute a majority, either by numbers or influence, who have no children to send to school, but feel a sufficient interest in the welfare of the rising generation to be willing to pay their share of the taxes to pay teachers' wages and keep schoolhouses in repair; whereas, if the school was to be wholly supported by tax on the Grand List, they would manage the thing so as to have no school at all, and no taxes. Again, it has a tendency to secure a better attendance on schools, for those who have to board and furnish fuel will have their attention called to the subject more frequently; and practicing natural economy, they will desire to get as much in return as possible for the outlay. So, instead of their children being allowed to run in the streets, they will see that they are in the schoolhouse.

C. W. FAY, *Hubbardton.*

---

I believe the desire in this town to have good schools, as well as the disposition to look after them, is on the increase. During the year two districts have been made from four. There are others, as I believe, which might be united with advantage. I hear of no objection to the existing school law. It is much easier to discover wrong than it is to right it. It seems to me that improvement, in respect to schools, is the result of well considered, well directed effort, and like charity begins at home. I shall insist this year upon a higher standard of qualifications for teachers, and shorten the period they remain in school, after ceasing in a good degree to be useful. Whatever other influences may unite, it is impossible to secure a good school without a good teacher. And it is well known that good teachers do not succeed equally well in different schools. It should be an object, then, with a district when it finds a teacher that is what it needs, to retain his services from year to year, to increase his pay if necessary, and surround him with its sympathy and confidence. This practice would secure that preference of the faithful teacher which is his due; it would give those that are adapted to the work and are earnest in it, a reputation, and would tend to keep down growth of worthless teachers. This growth is the more rank in proportion as the distinction between good and poor teachers disappears.

It strikes me, Mr. Secretary, that out of the ages between four and eighteen, there are enough of us to be educated. One of the saddest effects of ignorance is, that it clings so fondly to itself. Not only is there a shameful and prevailing lack of knowledge of the laws under which we live—there is an absence of manly thought, and purposes and aims which stir men to become wiser and better, and which you are laboring to create in public schools. There is many a man at this late day who will not see that it is for his benefit to school "other folks' children." There are many districts which spend an amount of energy and thought and wrangling that, properly directed would secure a marked improvement in the schools. There is many a man that would be a blessing to his district were he stirred by thoughtful care to benefit the boys and girls growing up around him, rather than by seeking every occasion to impress upon others what he has long been clearly convinced of himself, that he is the greatest toad the puddle boasts of.

A great detriment to the well-being of schools, as any one connected with them will not fail to see, is an under estimate of their importance, and lack of faith in them. One is often struck by the contrast between the character of a school as derived from

personal inspection and acquaintance, and the same as it exists in the minds of those who might and ought to be well acquainted with it. I account for this from the fact that, being bad often times ourselves, and conscious of it, we seek satisfaction in believing others bad. Too many of us would rather hear something bad of a person than any thing that is good. We prefer horrors to pleasant facts at the same price. We are willing for others to be taken down, for then, relatively, we are higher. Children instinctively see what is expected and most satisfactory, and come home to tell, not of the thousand delights of school life, but of enormities enforced, and rights cloven down, or attempts to subvert the authority of the teacher in which the narrator is a brilliant actor, all of which is colored as we can bear it. The consequence is that parents come to have erroneous and lowered ideas of schools, and the teacher meets from them, as well as from scholars, a suspicion that has to be met and disarmed before he can be useful.

CHARLES PARMENTER, *Mt. Holly*.

---

The fee allowed is a poor compensation for the toil endured in faithfully superintending common schools. But to know that the hearts of most of the youth and children beat kindly at the remembrance of one who has labored for their good, is real wealth.

And we have reason to hope, that when those whose characters are now "in process of formation" in common schools, shall come to act in our town meetings and council chambers, we shall find *few*, very few, who will lightly esteem the important work of Town Superintendents of common schools, or be unwilling to listen to the annual report of such Superintendent.

J. H. WOOD, *Pittsford*.

---

The importance of care and good judgment in the selection of teachers, whether male or female, can hardly be overrated. Most of our schools have been taught by female teachers. In the choice of female teachers rather than the other sex, we do not imagine districts are unfortunate. Providence seems to have designed that woman should be the teacher of children. I think those who accurately observe our schools, agree in attributing to female teachers a greater degree of tact and skill in teaching, than is usually possessed by males. They qualify themselves for teaching by attending Institutes, and otherwise and consequently make better and more successful teachers.

I am happy to observe that the custom of changing teachers with every term is gradually falling into disuse. No school can be really a good school which changes its teachers twice in every year. A teacher requires the experience of at least one term to become acquainted with his pupils. He has to classify them,—no easy task when the schools have not been graded. Then he must ascertain what mode of instruction is best adapted to the capacity of each one of them,—must study the peculiarities of their minds, else he cannot instruct them as he ought. We need teachers in whom is life intellectual and moral, for it is life they are to create or quicken in their pupils. None but living teachers can make living scholars,—enkindle within the pupil that enthusiasm and desire for improvement, which being enkindled, the task is half completed. Such teachers secured, together with the co-operation of parents, cannot fail of producing schools of no ordinary character. A more direct interest must be taken by the parents and patrons of our schools before we can bring them to that standard which ought to be aimed at by the people of Vermont. Some measure should be taken by Legislative action, or to awaken the people by some means to the importance of the punctual and regular attendance of pupils upon public schools. It is alarming, even with the great progress that has been made, to know how many of the children of our State are even without any education, and are not availing themselves of the opportunities that are so freely offered them by our system of education. I believe that the work the Board of Education is doing for our commonwealth, must convince every reasonable man that no money in our State is so well appropriated, and from which so great a benefit is to be derived, as the money expended for public education under its direction, and I trust the day has passed when hindrances will be placed in the way of its success and the accomplishment of its holy mission.

HENRY CLARK, *Poultney*.

I think our schools have made good progress the past year. My voice is still for good schoolhouses, schools on the Grand List, and good teachers, of course.

The importance of our primary institutions of learning, is not, I fear, duly appreciated. Prosperity, liberty, progress, civilization, all depend upon the amount of intelligence and virtue disseminated among the people; yet many realize it not. The cost of good schools, in the eyes of many, has a frightful aspect. People know the worth of dollars and cents. But what is a good common school education worth? If it can be prized in Federal money, I say not less than five hundred dollars to its possessor. But our efforts in behalf of schools do not correspond with this appraisal. We need a more lively, enthusiastic appreciation of intellectual wealth.

How are Superintendents generally elected in this State? I came to the honor of a re-election at our March meeting, and though I am nearly suffocated in my own laurels, I must tell my story, in hopes of winning another wreath. The Moderator says—"Please nominate for Superintendent." Some one calls my name—Moderator says, "all in favor, say Aye," and behold, as many as three voices responded, Aye! Contrary minded—None, and I was elected. Is this the way men are generally elected to the most important office in town?

A. C. FOSTER, *Sherburne.*

---

I will simply add to the foregoing statistics that the common schools in Shrewsbury, during the past year, have in some respects, shown an advancement over those of the preceding year; and with two or three exceptions, they have been very satisfactory to me and the people generally. We are having too many small districts, and consequently we have less interest in those schools. It is usually thought that young teachers will answer in such schools, as they can be procured much cheaper—consequently they have cheap schools.

As for school apparatus, we have none, with the exception of what the teachers carry into the school room. The people are yet unconscious of the benefits to the young arising from neat, commodious and well-furnished schoolhouses. They think more of the money than of the improvement that will be made.

The district clerks, in giving the answers required of them, complied with the law, with two or three exceptions. District No. 6 fails to return its Register as yet. I have approximated as near the facts as possible where omissions have occurred.

L. A. RUSSELL, *Shrewsbury.*

---

To you as Secretary of the Board of Education of Vermont, it is proper for me to speak freely and fully the ideas I have pertaining to the common schools of this State. The present school system of Vermont, I am confident, possesses excellencies which only a few have yet realized, and among them are those who see those excellencies as fitted more for theory simply, than for practice. The masses have not yet come up to the great working principle which it contains. When old things are done away and this system is allowed to show itself, it will be admired. And the trouble is in this as in every other like reform, the operators in it are not sufficiently interested for the development of the mind to work under any system where money is not *first.*

The great majority of teachers in the common schools of this State, teach for money, and for money only, and would about as soon have quadrupeds around them for the time they are to teach, as children; all they care for is the pay. We have some such nuisances every year, and have those of bad savor enough too. We want better educated teachers, those who love to study and love to develop science.

I am a minister of the gospel, but do not say "No teachers only those who are religious," but I do wish for no teachers who have no taste for literature, and only seek money. Some of our teachers have done fine things, and they are they who persuade me that there is good in our school system *to be* developed.

M. A. GATES, *Tinmouth.*

---

The several district schools in town, so far as I have been able to ascertain, as a whole, have given general satisfaction.

From the school Registers I perceive the schools generally have not been visited by parents. I think that parents, in not visiting the schools, do not manifest that interest which justice requires in so worthy a cause.

With regard to the support of schools, I am of the opinion that it should be raised by a tax on the Grand List; in other words, that the *property* of the State should support the schools of the State, which I think is a duty that the State owes to posterity.

HILAND E. PAUL, *Wells.*

---

I think the interest in our schools is increasing. People are disposed to sustain the law, and are willing that the standard of qualifications in respect to teachers should be raised more and more. But there is a large field open for improvement. People as yet hardly know what a good school or a good teacher is; and so for this reason fail in making the needful provisions and arrangements. And then they are quite too thoughtful of their money to make their schools as good as they know how to make them. A better day, however, is beginning to dawn; and there is hope that when we get under way a little more fully, our progress will become rapid and certain towards a far more advanced and satisfactory condition of our common schools.

E. IRVIN CARPENTER, *Barre.*

---

I think we may safely report progress in the cause of common schools. There were three new schoolhouses built last summer. Time accomplishes in this particular, what the friends of progress by argument and reasoning have failed to do.

More interest has been manifested to secure experienced teachers, and more citizens and parents have visited the schools the past year than ever before.

Public sentiment in regard to the support of schools here, is far ahead of the Hon. Legislature, for almost the entire expense of our schools is supported upon the Grand List. Even when the teacher is required to board around, in most instances, the tax is raised upon the Grand List.

EDWIN FISHER, *Cabot.*

---

There are many in this town, as doubtless there are throughout the entire State, who are very much opposed to our present "school law." But I am of the opinion that it will in time work itself clear, and those that now so strenuously oppose it, will in due time be compelled to acknowledge it as just what we *all* need.

The condition of the schoolhouses in this town will compare favorably with any in the country, and perhaps in the State.

There seems as yet a lack on the part of district clerks to make correct entries to all the questions. They put different constructions to the same questions, and of course do not understand them alike, and many of them do not know what some of the questions mean to convey, and return blanks for answers.

B. P. WHITE, *Calais.*

---

The most that is wanting at present to render the schools of this town equal to those of adjoining towns, is that parents sending scholars to school should themselves take more interest in the education of their children. I do not wish to be understood that they do not support schools sufficiently as far as dollars and cents will support schools, but they do not support them by visiting them.

In town there are two hundred and eighty parents, and during the past year but eleven have seen the inside of their schoolhouses, while a school has been in session. And of the eight Prudential Committees employed in town, but two have seen the school in session, and one of those was called in by the teacher.

E. W. HUNTLEY, *Duxbury.*

---

In regard to the schools in this town, I find they have generally been in a prosperous condition, as good perhaps as could reasonably be expected under the circumstances. Prudential Committes have been fortunate, in most cases, in securing the services of experienced teachers who have labored hard to do their duty.

There seems to be a great lack of interest on the part of parents in all parts of the town. But very few to appearance have taken any interest whatever in their schools

not even enough to visit them either term, summer or winter. This, in my opinion, is a sad fault, and will, I hope, soon be overcome in a measure, at least.

CHAS. E. TEMPLETON, *E. Montpelier.*

---

I would strongly recommend that it be rendered compulsory on the teachers to attend the public examinations.

We have some small schools in this town where they hire the cheapest teachers they can get, and then use every means to get a certificate, not regarding qualifications.

JOHN P. BROWNE, *Fayston.*

---

In relation to our schools, I have nothing in particular to say. There are some little indications of an increase of interest in the matter of education; one new schoolhouse of moderate cost and quality; and last year an increase of interest in length, and as high or higher prices paid for teachers employed therein.

A general opposition to the present school law, and a want of knowledge of what the provisions are, has much to do to take from the worth of our schools. Prudential Committees shrink from their duties by throwing upon the Superintendent additional responsibilities; it is claimed that the Prudential Committee has no power to dismiss a teacher, and other matters are understood about in the same way. I think one day spent by you in this town, would do very much for the cause here, and we hope to see you here the first of June next.

There have been some experiments made in the right direction the past year. In some districts they have boarded their teachers at one place; but I am of the opinion that the manner of obtaining the arrangement wanted in discretion, and will result in no gain to the system which should commend itself to every district in the State.

C. W. H. DWINELL, *Marshfield.*

---

The Committee of the Union district visit the school so often that it is difficult for the teachers to keep the account of their visits.

Our Union school works admirably; and is a great improvement on any thing we have ever had before.

ELI BALLOU, *Montpelier.*

---

One good schoolhouse has been erected in this town within the year, making seven in all that may be called "good." At least five of our schoolhouses should be torn down for kindling wood. They are worse than worthless as they stand, being a positive injury to the inmates and neighborhood. The benefit of the law is felt this year, in the increased attendance. One hundred and sixty more scholars are reported this year than last.

There is need of a greater regard for *decency* in the out-houses of our schoolhouses. Many of our children are learning obscenity and immodesty, unavoidably, in consequence of the wicked neglect of school committees.

Our district clerks, too, are sometimes very careless.

W. C. HOPKINS, *Northfield.*

---

The condition of our schoolhouses is more to be deplored than any thing else about our schools. And it is gratifying that the people are beginning to see it so. I think our school meetings are being better attended than heretofore. Our teachers, too, seem to feel their responsibilities, and perform them admirably. I find the Registers in better condition than in any previous year. They have been well kept, and are clean and neat.

I have said that the people are beginning to feel the necessity of neat and comfortable schoolhouses, and this is evidenced by considerable improvements which have been made the past year. Still, it would be a mercy if a majority of the schoolhouses in town could be providentially removed by fire or flood.

C. H. HEATH, Plainfield.

The schools in this town for the past year have been supplied with good and competent teachers, and have been well conducted; and I am glad to say that there seems to be a growing interest in the cause of education.

I think the right way of raising money to support our schools, is to raise it on the Grand List, thereby giving the poor a chance to educate their children as well as the rich.

B. S. EDGERTON, *Warren.*

---

The schools of the town have been universally successful the past year. With three or four exceptions, they have all been good, many of them *very good.* Hardly a complaint has come to me from any quarter during the year. Schoolhouses have been clean, order good, and teachers and scholars awake and in earnest. My visits have been a pleasure and not a task.

In my annual report a detailed statement is given of just how the school is found at each visit. The knowledge that this would be done, has had a marked effect in the cleanliness of the houses, and in the order and thoroughness of the whole work.

I repeat the suggestion made last year, of the propriety of making provision by law, by which teachers of character and learning and experience, and who have shown themselves apt, faithful and earnest workers in our schools, can obtain certificates running, at least five years, and good through the State, revocable, of course, for subsequent inefficiency or immoral conduct.

C. C. PARKER, *Waterbury.*

---

The schools in this town for the past year have been unusually good; not that all have been perfect, but that they have been improving ever since the new school law took effect, is very evident from the fact that the old folks see the need of the punctual attendance of their children, that the districts may obtain their share of the public money. And punctuality in scholars seems to be the great characteristic of improvement.

New schoolhouses are seen springing up in nearly all parts of the town, and every thing pertaining to the improvement of schools seems to be undergoing a great change. In some districts the people cling to the old way of defraying the expense of board and wood by a tax upon the scholar, but that also is fast going out of date, and I trust the time is not far distant when the schools throughout the town will be supported wholly by a tax upon the Grand List.

HIRAM WELLS, *Woodbury.*

---

The schools in this town, the past year, will compare favorably with those of former years. Indeed, I think there has been a steady improvement in the schools for some years.

About one half the districts support their schools wholly upon the Grand List, which, in my opinion, is the true method. One new schoolhouse has been built the past year, making four good schoolhouses in town. Two small districts which have been without any schools during the year, were united the last annual town meeting, thus making one good district. This, I consider a step in the right direction. Better have to go farther to school, than to have it so small as to be entirely devoid of interest. In some of the districts there appears to be little interest in the schools on the part of parents, and as a consequence, the average attendance is small. In others, where more interest is manifested, the attendance is much larger, the schools more orderly, and as a natural result, there are better scholars.

The present law when it is faithfully carried out, seems to work well and answer the end for which it is designed.

C. C. ABBOTT, *Worcester.*

---

The most lamentable thing in our schools is insubordination—disobedience to the rules of school, improprieties tending to lower the standard of morals, which, it is most to be feared, is more neglected than any other part of our school education.

The marked success that I find in our schools is particularly confined to those dis-

tricts, which, having once secured competent teachers, continue to employ them without regard to trouble or wages. The co-operation of parents with teachers is increasing, and visiting schools is more common. I hear nothing said against the present school system, except as to frequent change of books.

M. W. DAVIS, *Athens.*

---

There exists here, and I presume the remark will apply very generally, and is no an exception, an almost unaccountable degree of apathy, an unpardonable disinterestedness in regard to many vital points on educational matters. And nothing but "line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little" of stubborn facts, of statistical information laid upon and urged upon the minds and hearts of the people, can create such a desirable public sentiment as shall effectually arouse them to action, infusing the masses with an enthusiasm which shall be not merely of a sporadic and spasmodic character, but general and permanent.

A. A. WILSON, *Brattleboro'.*

---

What is essential to a good school? In reply, I say, first, a good teacher is essential. To this all will give their assent. I have never noticed the difference in the appearance of the same school, under different teachers, more than during the past year. I have been ready to say, almost: The teacher is every thing. The school is just what the teacher makes it. These things, however, should not be said without limitations and restriction. It is important that a teacher should be acceptable to the scholars; that her intercourse with them should be such as to make her presence a pleasure; and yet she must retain their respect. She must not forget the proper distinction between teacher and pupil. She must be devoted to the interests of her school. Her duty must not be supposed to be done when the clock strikes four, to be resumed the next day at nine. All the thought she is capable of bestowing on her work, both in season and out of season, is due to her school. This is virtually the engagement she enters into. She has, for certain considerations, agreed to bestow her best efforts for a given time, to the benefit of her pupils. It is confessed her labors are arduous, her responsibilities great, but she cannot escape from them, except at the expense of failure to be a good teacher. To be a good teacher, one must know how much to require of her pupils, how much they should study, and how much they should sit still. It may be a mistake for a teacher to reiterate the order every few minutes through the day, "Attend to that lesson, eyes on your books." It may be possible to keep a child's eyes riveted on his book, but it is not possible to chain his mind there a great while at a time. Requirements should be adapted to the nature of the mind in childhood. So should requirements be adapted to their physical state. A child should not be kept seated "post upright," still as a stock from morning till night. It is natural and as necessary for a child to stir as it is to breathe; yet the teacher must insist upon order, and a reasonable degree of stillness. These a skillful teacher will secure, while yet a sufficient allowance is given for recess and change of position. Teachers should understand the difference between teaching and simply hearing lessons. One may hear a lesson without giving any instruction. Here, I think, is a very general failure. It is not the chief business of a teacher to keep the machinery of school moving, or keep up its hum. The books studied are not the teacher, but helps. The person whom the scholars are required to address as "teacher," should be the teacher. She should be to her scholars the source of knowledge. She should impart to them of her own gathered stores, in such a way as shall interest and advance.

Good scholars are a second requisite. By good, as applied to scholars, I have not reference to scholarship, but to disposition and habits. We require on the part of the pupils punctuality. "Present every day" is the motto, and present in season.

We should be glad to see no name on the Registers followed by a long string of absent and tardy marks. The habit of absence and tardiness will have its influence fixed upon the character when school days are past. Another requisite of the pupil, is diligent attention to study, and a desire to apportion his time appropriately to the different branches of study. It is an evil to omit entirely any of the branches of common school study. Those who are strictly punctual, studious, and give a due proportion of time to each of the branches of study, will be every thing else that they should be. They will treat their teacher with respect. They will be quiet and orderly in all their deportment. The noisy, disobedient, disrespectful, and in every way disagreeable, are those who are often absent, seldom present in season, study but little and

learn nothing to any purpose. Such are an annoyance to the school, and the principal cause of trouble to the teacher.

The next requisite of which I shall speak, is a *good house*. To expect a good school in a poor house is as unreasonable as to expect a piece of land to be plowed with the mere wood of an old-fashioned plow, with the irons all worn off. You may put a good teacher into a poor house, you may place good scholars under her care, but the school will not be good. A good school is one in which the proper objects of school are attained. These cannot be attained in the highest degree in a worn-out, dilapidated, ill-constructed, over ventilated, unfortunately located house. It is sometimes honorable to "give up." I think we should do well to raise the white flag over some of our schoolhouses. Time has had his batteries long planted against them, and with shocking effect. It would be good policy, not cowardice, to vacate them. Fear not the tax,—it will be money well expended.

The next requisite is *good parents*.

A good parent will send children to school that know what subjection to authority is. There is but little danger that children well trained at home, will be troublesome in school. Parents who have the talent for discipline, will be very careful how they encroach upon the teacher's province. The children of such parents will never hear them say—"We think the teacher is too severe,—if she whips you let us know it, we don't send you to school to be punished." Discreet parents will never utter such things, even if a teacher has been faulty. Cases may occur in which parents may express their disapprobation of a teacher's doings. But it must be a clear case of wrong, and the disapprobation should be shown in a judicious way. Parents should know the extent of a teacher's authority, and never attempt to interfere with it. I would not be thought to advocate severity in inflicting corporal punishment. We have little to fear of this from the teachers of our schools. As a general thing, when parents complain of supposed severity, it is for the want of a little reflection.

B. F. FOSTER, *Dummerston.*

---

There are in connection with our schools some signs of progress. An increased interest is being taken in them by parents, a higher grade of character and scholarship on the part of teachers is being demanded. Increased desire is being manifested for the permanency of good teachers, and frequent and general reviews are being encouraged. The Teachers' Institute which was holden in our vicinity during the last summer, exerted a beneficial influence upon the teachers who attended.

S. ADAMS, *Grafton.*

---

The condition of the schools of this town has improved during the past year. Our teachers have, with slight exceptions, been persons of mature age and experienced in teaching, which is, in my opinion, almost an indispensable qualification in the teacher. I think too many young girls are employed in our schools as teachers; also too many boys, who would be better located if sent, like the youths of old, to Jericho for a season.

Much has been said relative to the justice and expediency of our law, concerning its method of defraying the expense of fuel and board of teacher. I am confident that the law cannot be better adapted to the wants of the inhabitants of Guilford than in its present form, viz., in leaving the matter to the sense of each district. I believe the law is a good one, but like all other laws, must be enforced before we receive its benefits.

J. H. RICHMOND, *Guilford.*

---

We have been highly favored during the past school year, in obtaining comparatively good teachers for our schools. But, a few things, in this town, tend to retard the progressive improvement in our common schools. 1st. They neglect, too generally, in this town, to have suitable schoolhouses. But few of the schoolhouses in town are suitable to be used for such, while many are wholly unfit. Again, there are no globes or outline maps in town, which I deem very essential to the welfare of a school, especially the former. If we can have but one in school—globes or geographies—give us globes. I wish the importance of having a good sized globe in every schoolhouse could be more deeply impressed upon the minds of the people. And

finally, there is not that interest taken in common schools, on the part of parents, which I desire to see. The whole thing is almost entirely submitted to the teacher. Parents do not co-operate with the teacher in promoting the good of the school.

CHARLES W. EMERSON, *Halifax.*

---

Our teachers, generally speaking, have kept their Registers tolerably well the present school year; but there is yet room for improvement. They report five of our schoolhouses as good, three as tolerably good, and four as unfit for their purposes. This is nearly their true condition, and is perfectly true of the last class. One of these, with the house lot, is prized by the district clerk, as shown by the Register, at five dollars. Another, with the lot, is prized by the district clerk, at seventy-five cents. I shall attempt no description of these valuable old specimens of ancient schoolhouse architecture. Their estimated value describes them sufficiently, and is at the same time indicative of an unfavorable sentiment in regard to them, that, to my mind, is full of hope. In fact, the district that owns the five dollar one, has already voted to build a new house. I should, perhaps, add in this connection, that two of our districts have thoroughly repaired their schoolhouses the present school year. We are moving at last in the right direction; but we move slowly.

In speaking of the condition of our schools, I said in my report, "Considered as a "whole, I think our schools, the present school year, have been good and have given "general satisfaction. But they were by no means as good as they ought to have "been, and they never will be until we all take hold together and work earnestly and "unitedly to improve them. The Registers reveal the fact that they are seldom vis- "ited by committees or parents. Visits by young ladies and young gentlemen, and "remarks by them on the good appearance of the school, when, most likely, the good "appearance of the schoolmaster or schoolmistress was the principal thing thought of, "are not what we want. We want the visits of parents, who love their children and "are interested in having them qualified for usefulness and respectability in life." I add that some of our teachers were deficient in the practical ability to communicate knowledge to their pupils. They were without much, if any experience, and without any specific education or proper preparation for the responsible duties of the school room; and hence performed their work like apprentices rather than like master workmen.

My official report is not yet printed, but it will be soon, and I will then forward you a copy according to your request. It is the first one of the kind, either written or verbal, ever made to this town; and contrary to my expectation, was listened to with good attention to the end. It was then voted, unanimously, to have it printed.

E. M. TORREY, *Jamaica.*

---

From what I have observed since I have been in this town, I think there is a good degree of interest felt by the citizens, in our district schools, but not as much, perhaps, as their importance demands. Some of the schoolhouses are very bad, and we need new ones, and I think that one or two of the worst will be repaired, or new ones built, the present summer. The heavy taxation for the support of the war, will probably put us back some in this respect. I think one of the most serious drawbacks to the usefulness of the schools in this town, is the multiplicity of kinds of text books,—a want of classification. The beauty, harmony and usefulness of a school depends, in a good measure, upon a proper arrangement in regard to classes. The schools here have not conformed to the list of books recommended by the Board of Education, and some of them would have almost as many kinds of books upon the various subjects as there were scholars studying them. I have endeavored to remedy this evil so far as I could, but have been able to accomplish but little. Parents are very slow to see the usefulness of a proper classification of schools. They think if their children have books, that is all that is required, no matter whether they are like those which the rest of the scholars have or not. In the comparison of schools, I have been forcibly impressed with the usefulness of parents' and committees' visits to school, by awakening a more lively interest in both teacher and scholars. Districts where this is practiced generally have the most useful schools.

A. B. BIXBY, *Londonderry.*

The Registers have been kept better the last year than heretofore.

I have ascertained an approximation to the number of instances of tardiness during the year, and they amount to 1398. This is a great evil, and the question naturally arises, Who is responsible for it? Is the teacher, or parent? The teacher certainly has a part to do, and in some instances, the mind of the child may be so waked up that he will not require any urging at home to be at school punctually at the hour of commencement. But as a rule, the scholar should be taught at home, (he certainly will be at school, for tardy scholars are annoying to teachers,) that it is as necessary for him to be punctual as it is for him to go to school at all.

I regret that the History of the United States has not been introduced as one of the branches required. The Geography and History of Vermont should by all means be added to the required studies. Give us good schoolhouses and good schools; give us rightly educated children; then shall we find a rich reward in the future. Let us place the schoolhouse beside the church in relation to pleasant position, comfort and taste. Let us make our schoolhouses bear some proportion to the finish and convenience of our court houses and jails; and while we have the magnificent capitol, may our schoolhouses and our schools be such that our Representatives will look from it upon them with satisfaction and pride. Let the "school homes" of New England children be what they ought to be, if we would have the future of New England what we wish it to be. Let the Press and the Pulpit speak; let politicians forget wire-pulling and office seeking, and bring their efforts to bear upon the common school interest, then would their philanthropy be worthy the name, and their conduct consistent with the true elements of political advancement. To awaken an interest in spelling, in which teachers as well as pupils are deficient, the Superintendent has recommended the gathering together of all the different schools in town, with their teachers, for the purpose of having an exercise in the spelling book. Also an exercise in arithmetic, reading and the American geography.

ORSON THAYER, *Marlboro'*.

---

The schools in this town during the year past have been, on the whole, successful. What we most need are better schoolhouses, and better qualified teachers. The teachers' employers have faithfully performed their duties to the best of their ability; but teachers need more encouragement that they may better prepare themselves for the arduous duties imposed upon them. I hope that the day is not far distant when we shall see a Normal school established in this State.

We have one very good schoolhouse in town, built during the past year, at an expense of $1,500, and if true manhood had its proper valuation, all would be of the opinion that the money thus expended has been returned even during the winter term. Of the remainder of the schoolhouses in town, the less that is said of them the better it will be for the sensibilities of their owners. I hope that they will, before long, give place to more convenient edifices.

In some districts, I find by the report of the teachers, that the citizens are in the habit of visiting the schools, and in many more, they rarely enter the schoolhouse. There are several families in town that have wholly, or in part, voluntarily deprived their children of the privilege of attending school. I could wish that the attention of the community might be called to this subject, and that means might be taken to obviate this evil, for an evil of alarming magnitude it would be if long persisted in.

WM. W. HAYWARD, *Newfane.*

---

The interest which patrons take, although small, is increasing; and were it not for the pressure of the times we should have urged and hoped to have seen some new houses taking the places of the "pens" in which our children are now confined during six months of the year.

With regard to our school law, we believe it is usually considered good. Some complain of the monopoly in books which it has brought about. Nor is this altogether without reason, for I have learned that the books which we use have advanced in market, while similar ones have remained at their usual prices. What shall be the remedy for this?

H. D. WALTON, *Putney.*

I regret to say that out of 96 children who might have attended school seventeen weeks each, the same as 28 have been deprived of all schooling by being kept at home, when, by a little extra exertion on the part of parents or children, this loss would never have occurred. Nor is this all. There have been 1055 instances of tardiness in all the schools in town, during the school year, averaging, perhaps fifteen minutes, which would make forty-four school days the same as if one scholar was deprived of eight weeks school. To put it in a still stronger light, the whole loss by absence and tardiness, is as though one child had lost four hundred and eighty-four weeks. The loss sustained by those scholars who *were* punctual by the others coming in late, or not coming at all, no one can compute.

J. B. GROUT, *Stratton.*

---

The last year has been one of more than usual prosperity in our schools. The effort to elevate the character of our schools has met with a good degree of success. A new interest has been waked up among all classes of our citizens. The people, we think, are much better acquainted with their schools than formerly,—the result of agitation relative to what our schools are, and what they should be. The Superintendent has been highly gratified, of late, to meet a goodly number of the parents at some of the public examinations of their schools. We hope it will become a universal practice with parents to visit their schools as regularly as the Superintendent does.

We regret to say that we still meet some of the old hindrances to the most efficient operation of our school system,—such as indecent, beggarly schoolhouses, cheap teachers, and a very great want of constancy and punctuality on the part of scholars. So likewise, nothing is more manifest than a very extensive lack of proper parental restraint operating to destroy order in school. Still there are some indications of advancement. A system of daily and weekly reviews has been quite generally carried out during the past year, greatly increasing the thoroughness of scholars and teachers. So likewise the schools have been made to feel that they will be examined at the close of each term; and this has greatly benefited them. For the future, we can only say that we are determined to do our best in spite of the old fogy part of our population.

C. L. CUSHMAN, *Townshend.*

---

Several districts in town have supported no school for several terms, preferring rather to send their small number of children to adjoining districts. But I know of no instance where a minority has been deprived of a school by a vote of the majority.

I occasionally hear some fault found with the complication of the present school system, but such complaints are generally made by those who manifest but little interest in the improvement of our schools. In my opinion, our school system however imperfect it may at present be, is working well. The very perplexity experienced by those officially concerned in the schools, tends to increase their interest in them. So far as I have been able to observe, shabby schoolhouses, the greatest irregularity in attendance, and the greater number of instances of tardiness, (other things being equal,) are found in the same district. Children love to frequent pleasant places. Who has not, in childhood, felt a thrill of joy at the prospect of living in a new house, or visiting in an elegant and well-finished mansion? It is just as important that our schoolhouses be made pleasant and attractive, as it is to make our houses so.

Much might be done to increase the attractiveness of our schoolhouses, without any pecuniary outlay, simply by surrounding them with shade trees. The voters in any district might thus spend a day together *pleasantly*, and never feel the poorer for it. The study of History is much neglected in the schools here; I think by the ill adaptation of the authorized text book to the age and capacities of the scholars.

E. O. LEE, *Vernon.*

---

There is a great want of attention to schoolhouses in town. Four are not fit for the purpose,—two of these are intolerable, and those that are good houses are located without regard to convenience or taste, with no yard but the road-side. There is one exception to this; District No. 8 has a neat yard.

Next to schoolhouses, there is neglect in engaging teachers. The wages paid in most of the districts will not ordinarily secure good teachers. For that reason we have the whole charge of the schools and furnish the teachers. Why not let the Superin- a new set of teachers in every school. I am not sure but the State will be obliged to take

tendents engage the teachers? This is the way in Massachusetts, I believe, and a district there has the same teacher for terms in succession. A teacher there has some motive to try to make a name as a teacher. As it now is here, it is all the same whether a teacher does well or ill, he is superseded the next term, and has little interest to show himself worthy of continued employment.

How can we make teaching in our common schools a business, and not an employment to fill up a little time between childhood and business life? The government of a school in the care of a teacher from seventeen to twenty years of age, will ordinarily be childish. The pupils may make progress in their studies, but there will be a want of manly development needful to fit them for the duties and responsibilities of life; or at least, is there not danger that this will be the case unless we can give this work of teaching a character that will call into it those who will make it a business?

The question is, how can we give permanent employment to good teachers, and dispose of the many candidates that are bidding for a term? Generally, a district has only six months of schooling in a year. This does not give permanent employment. Of course those offer themselves as teachers who have no other business on hand. How shall we remedy this evil? Shall we lengthen the schools to ten or eleven months in the year? This would be impracticable, if it was best, which may be a question, especially for small scholars. Will you give an answer to this question?

A. STEVENS, *Westminster.*

---

Over forty years the Records of our town will show that I have held some office in regard to our public schools, through all the different modifications of our school laws; but I am admonished by the weight of years, that it is time for me to withdraw from the active duties of the requirements of the several school laws, and content myself with becoming a silent spectator. Yet I shall never cease to feel a deep interest in the welfare of our primary schools, as I consider them as the germs of our future prosperity and independence.

Mr. Secretary, as you request the views, feelings and expressions of Superintendents in regard to our schools, I cheerfully comply with your request. The great business part of our community now upon the stage of useful and active life, received what education they now possess from our primary school institutions. How those institutions were conducted, say from A.D. 1800 to 1840, is familiar to every person who has arrived to the age of fifty. During this period of our State history, the hardy yeomanry of our State were laboriously engaged in preparing homes and regulating their farms and buildings for a more happy enjoyment of the present day. But, notwithstanding the limited means which the State possessed in her earlier career, she has reared up and brought forward a noble class of men and women, which will bear a criticism with any other class of native-born citizens of our common country. While our State is exerting every nerve to advance the condition of a common education, there seems to be too much back water to warrant so healthy and prosperous advancement in our primary schools as the State might reasonably expect. The great flood of *back water* seems to be at *home*. Here is where the great difficulty is located. It is next to an impossibility for a teacher to maintain a thorough and prosperous school where one-half of the district are in favor of government in school, and the other half are in favor of anarchy. This *home department* seems to operate in a thousand ways to impede the healthy progress of our district schools. Aunt Hannah has two little scholars, a son and daughter, who, in *her* estimation, are the personification of the angels in Heaven. Well, little Sammy and Hattie fix off to school at the commencement of the school term, and after a few days at school they come home with sad faces, with a pitiful story to their mother about the teacher. "Just what I expected when they hired that know-nothing to teach such a forward and accomplished school as ours." Aunt Hannah is all excitement, puts on her bonnet and shawl, steps over to see Mrs. Jones about the condition of the schools. Aunt Hannah having arrived at Mrs. Jones' she readily finds an accomplice in her wishes and desires, and the contagion spreads until one-half of the district is up in arms against the management of the school, and all because little Sammy and little Hattie said they couldn't like the teacher. The above, sir, is a true picture of affairs in very many of our schools. Taking the whole corps of teachers in the State, how many, I ask, are there who can go through with a school term prosperously and efficiently with all this *back water* to encounter? I repeat that one great hindrance to the advancement and salutary efficiency of our district schools is the home department.

In regard to competency or incompetency of our teachers, I wish to make some suggestions. It appears by the Reports that there are between four and five thousand teachers engaged in one school year in the State; what proportion of these teachers are *well* qualified for the vocation? I think it would be safe to say that the proportion is about the same as the commissioned officers of an army of the same number. We have some teachers who would rank as high as Major General, but very many who would not rank higher than Captains, Majors and Colonels. It is not in the power of Superintendents, in the examination of teachers, to decide with precision whether a teacher has the proper tact for guiding and conducting a school for the greatest advancement of the scholar, and the best interest of the district. Yet I find that we have some teachers, notwithstanding all the back waters of the Aunt Hannahs and Mrs. Jones, who will manage a school for the interest of the district, and come out with clean hands.

Before closing my remarks, I wish to say a few words, by way of encouragement to Prudential Committees, as the success of schools depends in a good degree upon the efficiency of that office. When a Committee man engages a teacher for the school term, let him inform the teacher of the character of the school and what the district expects of the teacher. If the district is opposed to whispering in school, tell the teacher so. If the district wish the teacher to have the care and oversight of the scholars during the intermission, and while going to and returning from school, then tell the teacher so. If the teacher feels competent to surmount all those obstacles, then the Committee can close a contract. There has been trouble in some of our schools this winter term, and the trouble was brought on through the mismanagement of Prudential Committees, of Aunt Hannahs and Mrs. Jones, and the incompetency of some teachers. I most ardently hope that the means now being used in our good State will, ere long, bring about a happy, prosperous and life-giving spirit to all our schools in Vermont.

One word more. I would say to teachers, *govern yourselves*. If you lack in self-government, you will lack in the government of your school. "He that ruleth his own spirit is more mighty than he that taketh a city."

JOSHUA LELAND, *Baltimore.*

---

The inhabitants of this town are comparatively dead on the subject of schools; there needs something to stir them up to a sense of their duty.

I think the idea of supporting the schools on the Grand List is gaining ground, and has now some very earnest supporters. Nearly all our schools raise the board on the scholar, and many, the wood, but the idea is fast exploding.

The average attendance of scholars falls far short of what it should be. I have sometimes thought that we ought to have a law compelling scholars to attend school. It might not be in accordance with the principles of a republican government, but perhaps it would be a good thing in some districts.

The majority of our schoolhouses are poor and unfit for their purposes. Not any of them are properly ventilated, while many of them are so much so that scholars cannot be comfortable. Is not a person's character determined, in a great measure, by the circumstances that surround him? Why not, then, surround our scholars with schoolrooms, &c., that will have a tendency to awaken in them a taste for learning, and, being attracted thither, let them grow up into men and women of whom we may be proud, and who may be an honor to the noble State of Vermont that gave them birth. None of our schoolhouses have good play grounds enclosed by a fence; indeed, some of them are so near the road that there is scarcely room for a team to get by. Neither is any attention paid to ornamenting with shade trees, which I think very desirable.

The school law, is I think, unappreciated by a majority in town; but it is doing a good work for our schools, and is constantly gaining ground. I have labored to show the people that it is better to have *some* law, even admitting that it has some imperfections, than no law at all. Although some grumble in regard to the particularity required in filling out and filing the Registers, yet I think the information given and benefits received from them are invaluable.

N. L. BOYDEN, *Barnard.*

---

There are many districts in town in which the people could do much honor to themselves, and render a great blessing to their children by pulling down the old buildings, now used for and called schoolhouses, and erecting in their places new and more commodious ones. We have thirteen schoolhouses, and strange to say, only three of the thirteen fit for their purpose. The remaining ten have outlasted their usefulness. Many of our farmers have horse-barns, sheds, and other outbuildings which are in bet-

ter repair and more pleasantly located than a majority of our schoolhouses. I have often thought it might be regarded a pardonable offense, if the children should rise in rebellion against their parents for their neglect in furnishing a decent schoolhouse.

Most of the teachers during the past year (considering the inconveniences with which they had to contend) have been quite successful. With few exceptions they have proved faithful and efficient, indicating the good sense of Prudential Committees in employing teachers of ability, regarding compensation of secondary importance.

The quantity of schools is of little consequence compared with the quality. The progress of schools is oftentimes greatly retarded by the interference of parents with the regulations of the teacher, whose task is rendered unpleasant by parents lending too ready an ear to the wrongs of their children, and inconsiderately speaking in disrespectful terms of the teacher.

ORA M. HUNTOON, *Bethel.*

---

In looking over the field since the time the license system for teachers went into operation, nearly a generation since, many of the seemingly strong objections in the way of the execution of the law have vanished, and the beneficent effects, obscured and beclouded for a while by the partial execution of the same, are beginning to be generally felt and acknowledged by a more general acquiescence in, and compliance with, its requirements.

The law as it now stands, requiring registration of schools, is generally executed, so far as teachers are concerned, with very commendable promptitude and correctness in this town. But that part requiring clerks to give certain statistical information conjoined by an oath of its correctness, is thought by them to be burdensome and difficult to perform, even with all the instruction in relation thereto; and much that should come as positive statistical facts, has to be inferred, or gained from other sources than those intended by the directness of the inquiries of the Registers. There is another department of clerks, where their returns are so indefinite as to suggest the propriety of special instructions and a form for making returns. I mean fractional districts.

I would suggest further the propriety of making more stringent rules (laws ?) for the government of Selectmen in making the division of the public funds. If districts may with impunity wholly ignore the registration of their schools, and employ teachers without license, and be *secure* in a share of the dividend on the basis of their entire numerical strength, as returned to the Town Clerk's office, whether attending school or not, it must serve greatly to discourage those districts which are making commendable efforts to comply with law, seeing themselves overruled and defrauded, either by culpable negligence or by the conniving of the board of Selectmen.

JOSEPH E. ELLIS, *Bridgewater.*

---

We have had some first-class teachers, but most of them are very deficient in their knowledge of *first principles.* It is often much easier for a candidate to write, analyze and parse a complex sentence, than to tell the different sounds of the vowels, or their use in the pronunciation of words. They understand the *theory of good reading* much better than the *practice;* can far more readily describe the principal rivers and mountains on the globe, than distinguish between latitude and longitude, or tell which way the earth turns on its axis; can very well explain the extraction of square or cube root, when they cannot accurately describe the *signs* of the fundamental rules of arithmetic. I think that but few of our teachers are *really* qualified for their business. Graduates of Colleges and teachers of High Schools do not always make the most successful common school teachers. I think there is great need, in our State, of schools for the special instruction and thorough drill of school teachers. But a good teacher cannot be manufactured from all kinds of material. Faculty and tact to impart instruction and govern a school must be possessed by the teacher, or he cannot successfully engage in the business. But undoubtedly there is much *native* talent existing, in a latent state, that might be developed were there sufficient inducement offered to engage as permanent teachers.

Several of the schools in town are very small, and rather diminishing than otherwise, and could some of the districts be united, better teachers could be employed with far more advantage to the scholars.

In regard to the schoolhouses, I would say two or three of them are quite new, several have been built within a few years, and some recently repaired on the inside, so as to be comfortable, while some others are more fit for *sheep pens* than for the common

school. With two or three exceptions, they all stand in the highway, or so near it as to endanger the lives of the scholars. Could our schoolhouses be made more neat and attractive, both internally and externally, and in the surroundings, not only the physical but the moral education of our children would be greatly improved. I would recommend that half an acre of good land, at least, be attached to every schoolhouse in the State, and that land be tastefully laid out in walks, and ornamented with trees and shrubbery, and a portion of it be cultivated as a flower garden, especially by the scholars, under the direction of the teacher in the interval of school hours, and that the study of Botany, in connection with Horticulture, be taught in our common schools. There is a certain moral principle within us that needs the refining and elevating influences of such studies to develop it.

When our schoolhouses and school-rooms can be neat, beautiful and attractive, and furnished with the necessary apparatus and furniture, and our schools supplied with able and efficient teachers who love their work and feel their responsibility, and when parents will take the interest in the subject that its importance demands,—then will children go to school because they *love* it, and not from compulsion, and our common schools become what they should be.

I rejoice to believe that there is more interest being taken in the subject in this town. I think, from the simple fact that teachers, district clerks and committees are required by law to fill out their Registers, and make certain reports and returns, they are led to attach an idea of importance to the cause, and of course feel more interest in it. I long for the time to come when every parent in the district will feel it a duty and a privilege to visit the school at least once every term. Then will both teacher and scholar be incited to new courage, activity and zeal in their labors.

J. N. MOORE, *Chester.*

---

I will send my report in place of any suggestions I might make here. I will however, say for your encouragement that we have undertaken to raise some twenty or thirty dollars for a Teachers' Library in our district. It is proposed to purchase a few volumes in the art of teaching, and say to our teachers, "*We expect you to improve your vocation.*" If perfectly convenient I should be glad if you would send me a list of a few you think most necessary. We have, too, in a district where there have been more than 2000 tardinesses during the last year, voted that no pupil shall be allowed to enter the school after four tardy marks are against his name until satisfactory explanation or apology has been made to the Prudential Committee, by whom he may be restored to his standing.

B. F. RAY, *Hartford.*

---

The present school law is a very good one, but has its imperfections as have all other human laws. If we were all law abiding people our laws would be kept. But as we are not, every officer that fails to comply with the requirements of the law should be subject to a penalty. I never have known of a district's failing to get its portion of the public money, but I have known many districts to fail in filling up and filing their Registers by the 21st of March.

If the Superintendent fails to make his returns by the first of April, he is liable to lose the pay for his services. He cannot do it without the Registers. He goes to the Town Clerk's office for the Registers and they are not there. What shall he do? Shall he go around town and collect the Registers, or shall he fail to make his returns? There should be a remedy. I think if the Legislature should pass an act making the Selectmen liable to a heavy fine if they give any portion of the public money to any district that has failed to comply with the requirements of the law, it would make all concerned more attentive to their duty.

DANIEL SPAULDING, *Hartland.*

---

The Selectmen of our town deemed it inexpedient to incur the expense of printing a School Report this year. They could not see the utility of putting forth so much *reading* as is contained in an ordinary school Report, but more especially in the annual Report of the Secretary of the Board. The schools, in their opinion, were not so good as they were thirty years ago—and the unspoken inference evidently was that it was in part owing to printed reports stuffed full of reading matter. Knowing as I did that a report would be expected and *desired* at the town meeting, I prepared a brief

tabular statement and posted it on the side of the Hall. This was carefully examined —I presume, by every person present, and did not take up the precious time, nor interrupt the business of the meeting. There is no doubt, however, but that the Selectmen reflect the sentiments of no inconsiderable portion of the community. The remark is often made that the schools are not so good as they used to be,—the object being to throw discredit upon the reformatory movements—pretty much as some people say, that more *liquor* is drank now than formerly, although one of my neighbors has an old day-book of 1830, which contains as many as seven charges for rum on a single page. If we succeed in obtaining *specifications* of inferiority, they generally amount to these; that the schools are not so *still*, and that the teachers do not *show* the scholars so much in arithmetic as formerly. People do not take into consideration the fact that "in those days" such a thing as a recitation of a lesson in arithmetic with explanations and operations before the class on the blackboard, was never dreamed of; that there were no classes in mental arithmetic, none in geography, and scarcely any in grammar. The schools of this town are not half as large as they were when those now in middle life were scholars. *Then* it was thought necessary in winter to have for a teacher a man who was strong in mind and muscle. *Now*, it is sometimes thought a young, modest and inexperienced young lady at a price not exceeding two dollars a week will answer to keep the winter school. When such a one is brought face to face with a set of over-grown semi-barbarians, who are *innocent* of everything like gentlemanly feeling, it is not strange that somebody should be led to conclude, from what he can learn, that the school is not so good as the one he attended forty years ago in the same edifice. Some of our small schools on the hills are however models of good order, quiet, punctuality, studiousness and proficiency. I should desire no better school for my own children, for some years at least, than I have seen in this town the past winter.

I have visited nearly all the schools twice, and some of them as many as eight times during the winter. In one or two instances, I have visited every family in the district; and where there seemed to be almost universal dissatisfaction, I have advised the teacher to leave, even if I believed that under other circumstances he would do well.

Nine-tenths of the parents never visit the schools, but it would not be fair to conclude from this circumstance that they take no interest. Mothers cannot conveniently leave home or get about, and fathers, to use their own expression, "feel like a cat in a strange garret," when screwed up in one of the seats of the school house. But they do take an interest in the school, and it would be a great mistake and misfortune for Superintendents, Committees and Teachers to ignore the wishes, opinions and even prejudices of parents in reference to their schools.

The people generally acquiesce in the existing school law; although some complain that there are no means of *compelling* parents to send in their own districts—thereby securing to the district a greater amount of money.

Some important improvements have been made in one or two school houses. And I notice that without exception the schools are supplied with a plenty of good wood suitably prepared and sheltered. The only drawback is, that in some instances space is taken for a wood-shed which is needed in the school-room. The Bible or Testament has been daily read in nearly all the schools. Two or three teachers, while professing great respect for the Bible, have expressed the opinion that the sabbath school and the home are the most appropriate places for it. I have simply recommended that it be used.

MOSES BURBANK, *Ludlow.*

---

With two exceptions, the schools in this town have been satisfactory; several we may call excellent, two or three indifferent, and others of a higher order. We have but two schools wholly supported upon the Grand List. In my intercourse with the people I find much opposition to thus supporting our schools, yet there are many advocates for it. I think, in view of our present prospective high taxation, we shall find more opposition to such a system than there would have been, say two or three years ago.

In a letter dated December 8th, I gave you an account of an unpleasant difficulty in district No. 10. It seems that the school had never been wholly supported by a tax upon the Grand List; but after the teacher for the winter Term had been hired and was about commencing her school, the minority, who sent nearly all the children, determined that it should be, while the majority were equally determined it should not; the

result was, the teacher remained all winter in the school house with from one to two scholars. This may seem to one at a distance, to be a clear case demanding a law to support all schools upon the Grand List, yet I can hardly think so, for I am not quite so sure that they would be satisfied with that. I do not think it expedient to have a Statute law to support all our schools by a tax upon the Grand List, but rather let each district manage its own affairs in its own way. The very effort which the poor will have to make to school their children, will enhance its value to them. Whatever is of value, is worth striving for.

I am surprised to find so many instances of corporal punishment inflicted; there could have been no necessity for it. It seems that it was mostly inflicted in the summer schools—one half of the instances being in one district, which shows that there must have been a lack of decision on the part of the teacher. When it becomes absolutely necessary to punish (if the time ever does come) let it be done so it will not need repeating. In general, the cultivated intellect, kindly feelings, and earnestness of purpose in the teacher with a soul gushing forth in generous love for his pupils, are sufficient to melt down all opposition to his wishes. Evidently, such are the teachers committees should engage. The fact that only three visits by committees to their schools have been made in town the past year, speaks for itself. I am inclined to think that the law does not place responsibility enough upon the Prudential Committee. Do not committees generally think that the duties are so far taken from them that they care little for what is left them to do?

The statistics which I have given are not in all cases quite correct for the reason that the district clerks are most sadly remiss in their duty. Their Registers are incorrect—done in a bungling manner; and at the time the selectmen divided the public money, March 25th, but few of the Registers were returned and had to be sent after. This ought not to be so.

In regard to the qualifications of teachers, I have found but little difficulty thus far—not more than two but were very well qualified indeed.

We have two or three good school houses, while several are utterly unfit for their purpose. One school house I found situated on the top of a hill—the most bleak and windy place in the whole district. It was a raw windy day in May. The day before had been rainy, and without any wood-shed everything combustible was thoroughly soaked. One little urchin stood over the stove trying in vain to kindle a fire, while twenty-five little darlings "blue as a whet-stone," shivering, were "ranged around;" and such a chattering of teeth! One unacquainted with a Vermont school house might have thought them all the children of "Harry Gill."

EDWIN S. JACKMAN, *Pomfret.*

---

Extract from my report made to the town. "I consider the schools of this town during the past year as a general thing very profitable. A few cases of dissatisfaction have occurred (as there always have and I presume always will, so long as men act from different motives) yet in no case has there been any serious disturbance.

The teachers generally have been more than ordinarily well qualified for their positions, many having had considerable experience in teaching. Those teaching the winter schools had taught an average of some nine terms each. I think they have all labored faithfully, and the success with which they have met, has been as good upon an average, as one might reasonably expect. The attendance has not been as good as it might have been. I can see no good reason why more than one-third of the whole number of scholars should be absent from school each day. It does a scholar but very little good to go to school now and then a day, while it does the school a *positive injury*. This is a fault with our schools, which the teacher alone cannot remedy. The parents must attend to it. It is poor policy to hire a laborer and furnish him with means for doing less than two thirds of a day's work each day; yet this is exactly the case with several of our schools.

Did scholars realize the difference in the progress made by scholars who attend punctually and those who do not, I am sure the school Registers would present a different appearance.

CHARLES C. BUCK, *Reading.*

---

I refer you to my report to the town, a copy of which I send you.

From want of time and a pressure of engagements, I can add but little. The Registers are very well kept by the teachers, but the District Clerks are more deli-

cient in their returns. For example, one Register this year is without the name of the Clerk, uncertified by a Justice, and many of the blanks unfilled. Another, less defective, is uncertified by a Justice, and the Clerk's name is not given. Such districts are not legally entitled to a share of the public money, but still they obtain it. It is in the power of the Selectmen to set this matter right, so that a clerk who does not try to do his duty, would never do the like again. I intend to bring this subject before the town next year.

I find it difficult to exclude incompetent teachers. One whom I rejected, plead the fact that he had taught four winters under other Superintendents, and finally, at a second hearing, I licensed him, but only because he had *commenced* his school. He ought not, however, to have had a license, and yet he will probably say next year that I, as well as others, have endorsed him. Another obstacle is, many of the applicants live in town and have numerous relatives, and if one should be rejected, the Superintendent would probably find that he had "woke up a hornet's nest." Some teachers are very good in one department, and by that get a reputation, while exceedingly deficient in other things. Last winter we had a teacher who is first rate in books, but in *government* he can do nothing. The poorer teachers, however, are dropping off, and cease to apply under the license system, and I am confident that there is progress in our schools. The town is taking more interest in the subject,—is anxious to have the reports printed, and would be glad to have the law well administered. You will perceive that only one teacher undertook to go through his school without a license, and he learned a lesson from it which he will not forget.

The schools are not *visited*, as they ought to be by the parents. This is the greatest lack, I think. Even the Prudential Committees do not often see the schools. The only visitors, in some cases, are the Superintendent and the personal friends of the teacher, many or all of whom reside without the district.

CYRUS B. DRAKE, *Royalton.*

---

Though the education of the young—its system and practice—is not all it ought to be for the best good of the rising generation, yet I find, from year to year, a very decided improvement in the instruction and government of our common schools, and in the interest awakened in the minds of the parents in the community. Our teachers as a general thing, are better qualified than formerly; they are more systematic and thorough in the discharge of their duties; in the enlightening and training of youthful minds entrusted to their care; and the scholars are taught more clearly the first principles of book knowledge, and are becoming more thoroughly educated in our district schools. One great fault in this town, if nowhere else, has been a too great neglect of the first principles of good scholarship, the fundamental branches of education. The different sounds of the letters, the construction of sentences, and the art of correct reading and spelling, have been too much, not to say shamefully overlooked both by the teacher and the taught. They have jumped over the foundation stone—the spelling book—on the threshold of the temple of science, that they might gain a quicker sight and a higher view of objects above and beyond them. They expect to build a house by beginning at the top, while an edifice, to be durable, must always have a good foundation. In former years, in some of our schools, the science of figures or the knowledge of arithmetic, and that not mental, but with slate and pencil, was about all the children wished to understand. And many of the parents seemed to uphold them in such a course. This has led some to oppose a change in the old manner of instruction, and to find fault with the school law of the State and especially with the office and power of town Superintendents. After all, I am happy to say that there has been a decided improvement in all our common schools the past year. May they go on to perfection. Still we have two evils to contend with in our schools, which hinder their usefulness. The first is, as most of our districts are small in numbers, they think they must have young and inexperienced, and last, not least, cheap teachers, so as to lengthen out the term of school. Secondly: they have not sufficient regard to the moral qualifications of those they employ as instructors. Our dearest teachers, who possess good moral characters, are found to be the cheapest in the end; they exert the best influence upon the minds of their pupils, and those around them, and have proved themselves, by their works, the most capable and efficient teachers in our district schools in Sharon. May they be everywhere desired, and greatly multiplied throughout the State and the Nation.

PHILETUS CLARK, *Sharon.*

My statistical returns are, in several particulars, but an approximation to the truth. Teachers, generally, have kept their Registers well, though I have noticed two or three serious errors in giving the average daily attendance. But the district clerks have done their part very imperfectly, most of them, and I have had to guess at the answers to some of the most important questions. The clerks do not seem to understand or appreciate the importance of these statistics. How can a thoughtful, well-informed man esteem them lightly? It is a mystery to me. One question is generally answered by the clerks, viz: "How much money was raised on the Grand List?" The districts, generally, have the slovenly habit of applying the public money to the support of the schools for the year that is past, and of voting to raise money enough on the Grand List to pay the balance, consequently no one knows how much is raised on the Grand List till after the distribution of the public money. This is a very unbusiness-like way of doing business. The public money of this spring should be applied to the support of schools for the ensuing year.

The returns from the fractional districts have been of but little use to me. I would suggest your giving fuller directions in the Registers, to both teachers and clerks, in regard to their duties in such cases.

Our schoolhouses are most of them very poor, and as for apparatus, we have none except blackboards. We have too many districts, and several of the schools are too small to be very profitable.

I am decidedly in favor of the whole expense of schools being defrayed by a tax on the Grand List. To me, it seems too self-evident a proposition to need argument. It would indeed need argument with people living under mediæval depotism and darkness. It is a proposition which is included in the general proposition, that the people shall govern.

What is most needed in this town, is a more thorough acquaintance with the law, and a more thoughtful and loving sympathy with its spirit and purpose. Generally, ignorance of the law, and of the whole subject of common school education, is the cause of the chief opposition to the law and to those improvements which the friends of the cause are trying to bring about. Your lectures, sir, are the most powerful means of arousing and enlightening the public mind on this subject. Give us as many of them as you can.

MOSES MARSTON, *Stockbridge.*

---

I think there is an increasing interest manifested by the parents in several of the districts in town. In one, they have built a new house the past season, at a cost of $600, and it would be well for others to follow their example, as the houses are wholly unfit for use. But in a majority of the districts in town, there seems to be not much interest in the education of the children.

We have held teachers' meetings in different parts of the town during the year, for the purpose of discussing matters pertaining to our schools, and have tried hard to awaken an interest in teachers and parents. Some of these meetings were well attended, and at others not a single parent was to be seen. Teachers were much interested, and we have had better teachers and better schools during the past winter than at any other time since my official connection with the same. The disposition in many districts to hire poorly qualified teachers because they could be obtained *cheaper*, has been a serious annoyance to me, and, I think, a great hindrance to the progress of our schools. I have adopted as high a standard of qualifications at the examination of teachers, as, in my opinion, was necessary, and have been obliged to refuse to grant certificates in a number of instances, which has occasioned some opposition, as has also my report of those schools that I considered failures. We need thoroughly qualified earnest, wide-awake teachers, who have at heart the welfare of their scholars; and we must have such teachers or our schools will suffer.

JUSTUS DARTT, *Weathersfield.*

---

The subject of suitable schoolhouses is receiving considerable attention in Weston. The public began to consider the matter some five years ago. The superior condition of those schools having neat, convenient, well lighted and ventilated houses, became so apparent to every observer that most districts saw the importance of repairing or building anew; and so rapidly has this reformation gone forward, that only five o the old houses are left, and these, five years ago, were the best in town. I think, during the coming summer, a portion of the remaining five will shed their old shabby

apparel, put on a neat white dress, and be fit companions for their tidy looking neighbors. Two new schoolhouses have been built during the past year. One a neat, convenient, pleasant house, in one of our smallest districts. It is an ornament to the district, and reflects much credit upon the inhabitants. The other is a large and beautiful structure, in the village, built at a cost of $4,000. This, with its inviting aspect and necessary appliances, will yield to the stockholders a greater interest than six per cent.

Z. G. HARRINGTON, *Weston.*

---

The responsibility resting upon parents and guardians cannot be over-estimated; yet seemingly, but few feel the importance of their duty. They but little realize that a careless indifference on their part is very soon felt by the child. Children are creatures of imitation; their minds are shaped by surrounding influences. Too many but little realize this fact or are indifferent in regard to its results, or but little appreciate the importance of education.

Our schools can never occupy the position they ought until parents and guardians are more thoroughly aroused to their importance, and manifest a deeper interest in their welfare. Let their interest be as thoroughly awakened upon this subject, as it is in the improvement of their herds and flocks and an impetus will soon be given that will make the Green Mountain State a beacon light to the world. Let there be a hearty co-operation of parents and teachers. Let the teachers be aided and sustained in their arduous labors by a manifest interest shown by an occasional visit to their schools, speaking encouraging words to both teachers and scholars, showing both by precept and example their interest in the prosperity of the schools. When the parent is asked to get a new book in order perhaps to class the scholars more properly, the the scholar should not be told that the old book is good enough,—it is such as the older ones used, and you must use it, even if you have to recite alone. Such things embarrass both teacher and scholar and destroy much value of the school. Much depends upon the proper classing of scholars in order to awaken an interest. There are too many classes in schools so far as my knowledge extends, in consequence of having too many kinds of text books. There is more interest in a class of several than where there is but one in the class. Competition is the life of business, and is visible in school. In a school properly classed you see a greater interest, other things being equal, than in a school where but little attention is given to this subject; it is usually seen in a more punctual attendance, consequently the greater interest. Teachers have more time to devote to each class in illustrations which make recitations more interesting.

D. F. HEMENWAY, *West Windsor.*

---

Having had but a short acquaintance with the schools in town, it would be impossible for me to accurately compare their current prosperity with their condition in the past; but from such acquaintance and observation as I have been able to make, it seems evident to me that the people of the town are feeling and manifesting an increased interest in the prosperity of our public schools.

The present standard of qualification of teachers is much too low, and should be raised and rigidly too: and I fear that Superintendents have often erred on the side of too great lenity, in the somewhat delicate and responsible duty of examining and licensing teachers. The standard of excellence among our teachers can only be raised by insisting upon more rigid examination. No teacher should be employed who is not competent to understand and realize the responsibilities that rest upon him, and that every impression that he makes upon the youthful mind is forming and modifying a character for all coming time, and that the effect of wrong impressions can never be wholly eradicated.

More circumspection should be observed by Prudential Committees: they should make competency a *sine qua non* in the employment of teachers. Too little regard has been paid to the appointment of Prudential Committees, for they are executive officers under our statute of large powers and almost unlimited discretion, and should be fully qualified to judge of the competency of teachers, and should frequently inspect the schools committed to their care. Nearly one-half of the Prudential Committees in this town have wholly neglected their duties in not visiting the schools under their supervision during the past year.

WM. McCOLLOM, *Woodstock.*

Such is the most authentic and reliable statement of the condition of the schools as derived from the official returns of the teachers and district clerks. And while it must be admitted that entire accuracy has not been attained, it is hopeful that the returns for the last year are much more correct than were those of the preceding year. The importance of accurate statistical knowledge is, as yet, so inadequately appreciated, that officials, who are required by law to make statistical returns are not willing to give the necessary attention and labor.

But a decided improvement is evident in regard to school statistics, both from the returns themselves, and from the reports of the Superintendents. The almost uniform tenor of the reports quoted, shows that the teachers have discharged their duties in regard to keeping the Registers much more faithfully and intelligently than ever before. And the failures and inaccuracies that are complained of arise from the neglect of the district clerks mainly. It is to be hoped that, as the years pass, the manifest usefulness of authentic information in regard to the condition and necessities of our schools, will so far correct the prevalent indifference of the public mind as to make it disgraceful for any official to omit or neglect his duties in this direction; and thus alone can the evil be cured.

Such reports given by the men specially appointed to the local supervision of the schools, furnish the most minute and reliable materials for a general view of the condition and wants of the schools in the State at large, and, on that account are of much greater value than is commonly supposed.

Leaving all comment upon these reports for a subsequent portion of the report, I here insert the statistical summary for the State, a reference to which will give the best criterion by which to judge of the correctness of the views and opinions of the Superintendents as above quoted

## STATISTICAL AGGREGATE FOR 1862.

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of heads of families, | 57,200 |
| " " children between 4 and 18 | 89,599 |
| " " weeks of school by male teachers, | 14,500 |
| " " weeks of school by female teachers, | 51,065 |
| Amount of wages paid male teachers, | $62,512 |
| " " " " female " | $101,400 |
| " paid board of teachers, | $69,560 |
| " " for fuel, furniture and incidentals, | $28,067 |
| " " " erecting school houses, | $54,019 |
| " " " repairing school houses, | $13,859 |
| " Public money distributed March 1861, | $105.165 |
| " raised on Grand List, | $117,318 |
| " raised on the scholar, | $21,670 |
| " Wages, Board & Fuel, | $251,251 |

the preceding year is required in order to a full perception of its real bearing and true significance.

But before taking such survey and collation, it will not be amiss to call to mind the extent to which our state in common with others has been disturbed and shaken by the tremendous convulsion of our nation that is threatening its very existence. Every one of the great interests of society, outside of the schools, has been jeopardized, and most have been seriously injured, by an almost total engrossment of the public mind in matters pertaining to an actual struggle for national unity certainly, and perhaps for national life. Hence, if a survey of the statistics should ascertain only a diminution of interest in the schools,and of attendance upon them, proportional to the very perceptible abatement of prosperity in every other direction, we have no special cause of discouragement with regard to the educational interests of the State. But if, on the other hand, the statistics should, upon careful examination, reveal a steady and progressive improvement in the most prominent and important directions, there would be manifest ground for encouragement and a rational hopefulness.

With this precaution, it may be well to examine the statistics, grouped in reference to the common and leading topics of general educational interest.

## NUMBER OF CHILDREN BETWEEN 4 AND 18.

The number of children reported for the last year as between four and eighteen is 89,599, while for the preceding year, the number reported was 85,892. Here is a difference in favor of the last year of 3,707, which, if it could be relied on as indicating an actual increase in the number of our children, would be very gratifying. But there is reason to believe that this apparent difference is caused by a greater accuracy in taking the list for the last year. Too little care has been habitually given to the taking of an accurate annual census of the children of the commonwealth, for its importance has not been generally perceived. While it is a commonplace remark, that the multitudes of its healthy and happy children are the truest indicators of the general prosperity and capacity of a free State, it has not been equally evident that a reliable census of these children, in forcibly presenting the magnitude of the results involved, is a potent instrumentality in effecting progressive improvement of the schools that are to determine the culture, capacity and character of each successive generation.

## DURATION OF THE SESSIONS OF THE SCHOOLS.

During the year last past, there have been sustained 14,500 weeks of school under male teachers and 51,065 weeks under female teachers, while during the previous year, were sustained 15,950 weeks of school by male and 48,798 weeks of school by female teachers.

The difference between the two years is well worthy of more than a mere passing notice. When we recall the prevalent alarm and distress

of the past year and the unusual demands that were inevitably and imperatively made upon the pecuniary means of every patriotic individual and every community, together with the general stagnation of most kinds of business, we cannot avoid surprise at the above results. It not only would not have been unreasonable, in view of existing circumstances, to have expected evidence of a decided diminution of the duration of the schools, but it would scarcely have been reasonable to have anticipated any other result. And yet we find that while in 1860–61 there were 64,748 weeks of school sustained in the aggregate, there were 65,565 weeks of school in the aggregate sustained in the year 1861—62, leaving a difference in favor of the last year of 817 weeks. This is a result as gratifying as unexpected, and its significance is enhanced when taken in connection with the fact that many districts have discovered that the distribution of the public money upon the average instead of the aggregate attendance, does not conduce to the prolongation of the sessions of the schools, although it does directly and effectively promote regularity of attendance.

## MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS.

A change in the relative numbers of male and female teachers has been gradually occurring during the few years last past, and the number of female teachers has been steadily increasing, while that of male teachers has correspondingly diminished. A variety of causes have operated to make this change more marked during the last year. The unsettled condition of public affairs has closed many of the Western Schools that had been taught by female teachers from the East, and a large proportion of loyal female teachers have been driven from the Southern States, and thus the supply of female teachers has been unusually large, and has, of course, tended to increase the number of female teachers in our schools.

Another cause has contributed powerfully to this end, and it is one in the highest degree creditable to the male teachers of the State. No vocation in the State has given more reliable evidence of devoted and patriotic attachment to the country than have the Teachers of Vermont, and no class of men have been or are now more largely represented in the national army. The Second Vermont Regiment, as I have been informed by an intelligent teacher therein enrolled, had more than two hundred teachers in its ranks, and large numbers of our teachers have joined every regiment that has left the State. Truly this is a record of which every friend of Education may well be proud. A comparative scarcity of male teachers has resulted from this unusual draft, which has increased the proportion of female teachers.

This proportion has also been gradually increasing from a growing conviction that female teachers were better adapted to give instruction to all primary schools, from their greater aptitude to the management and control of young children.

There were 15,950 weeks of school by male teachers in 1860—61 and only 14,500 weeks in 1861—62. In 1860—61 there were 48,798

weeks of school by female teachers, while in 1861—62 there were 51,065 weeks. In other words there were 1450 weeks less of school by male teachers, and 2267 more by female teachers in the school year last past than in the preceding year, making a proportionate increase of female schools of 3717 weeks.

## WAGES OF TEACHERS.

This topic is intimately connected with the last, and needs attention in order to a full appreciation of the bearing of some of the facts already cited.

The amounts of money paid for the wages of teachers during the last school year were as follows: Wages of males $62,512, wages of females $101,400. For the preceding year the amounts were, for males $70,666 and for females $97,198. Thus it appears that the amount of wages paid male teachers during the last school year was less by $8,154 than it was during the year before, while the amount paid female teachers was greater by $4,202.

Thus the aggregate amounts paid for the wages of teachers in the two last years respectively were as follows: in 1860—61, $167,864 and in 1861—62, $163,912; showing that the aggregate amount paid for wages to teachers during the last year was less by $3,952 than the amount paid during the previous year.

The average wages of male teachers in 1860—61 was $17,72 per month; in the last year it has been $17,24, showing a diminution of 48 cents. The average wages of female teachers in 1860—61 was $7,96, and in 1861—62 it was $7,92, showing a diminution of four cents per month.

Hence, in the first place, the reduction of wages is very slight, and, in consideration of the injury worked by the war to every other leading interest may be called exceedingly small, much less than could reasonably have been anticipated.

In the second place, the wages of male teachers have diminished more than the wages of females. This is a hopeful indication, for the great disparity between the wages of male and female teachers has not been very creditable to the general sense of justice and right. It is very difficult to assign any good reason for permitting the sex of the teacher to affect in any way the wages which the teacher whether good or bad, should receive. A good school is of priceless value, who ever the teacher; and an inferior school is dear at any price, to which ever sex the teacher may happen to belong. It is pleasant to see evidence during the last year, as hitherto, that public sentiment is gradually, though slowly, discontinuing a distinction that is founded in injustice.

It also appears from the statistics, that while schools have been sustained during the past year for 817 weeks more than during the previous year, there has been paid for wages of teachers, an amount of money less by the sum of $3,952. Thus is furnished an argument in favor of the employment of female teachers to a greater proportional extent that deserves, and is quite likely to have, great weight with the public mind,

[illegible] schools taught by females compare favora-
[illegible]

[illegible] of the reports of the Superintendents [illegible] show, that, by the uniform drift of reports [illegible] State, the schools of the past year have been [illegible] and useful. This fact is particularly noticed in [illegible] and at the same time it appears that a much [illegible] teachers has been employed than ever before [illegible] schools. Or in other words, it is shown that during [illegible] much longer sessions of schools than have been [illegible] common propertion of female teachers has been em- [illegible] as a whole have been unusually successful; and [illegible] results have been attained not only without any addi- [illegible] at a diminished expense.

## SCHOOL HOUSES.

[illegible] for the erection of school houses of $44,617 was [illegible] year 1860—61: and it is a remarkable fact that during [illegible] notwithstanding a pressure of public and individual [illegible] unknown for many years, the amount reported as expended [illegible] of school houses is $54,019, being an excess over the ex- [illegible] previous year of $9,402. This reveals a state of facts [illegible] hopeful than could have been anticipated.

[illegible] the organization of the Board the subject of school houses and [illegible] important bearing which they have upon the condition of the [illegible] have been made the most prominent topics of attention and dis- [illegible] monthly so. And this was the case before the organization [illegible] In other states, whenever an organized effort has been in- [illegible] for the improvement of the schools, the one topic that has first [illegible] the attention of all concerned in the welfare of the schools, or [illegible] required to suggest measures of improvement, has been that of [illegible] houses.

When in 1846 our excellent State Superintendent, the late Gov. [illegible] made his first Report to the Legislature, he finds this matter of [illegible] houses presenting itself and demanding immediate and thorough [illegible], and he uses the following language.

"The condition of school houses has so extensive and important a [illegible] upon the condition of the schools themselves, not only in regard [illegible] the comfort and health of pupils, but in regard to their progress in [illegible] and even the formation of their moral character, that it is [illegible] proper to advert to this topic here. It might occur to any one [illegible] traveling through the State, that our school houses are almost uniformly [illegible] in an uninteresting and unsuitable spot, and that the buildings [illegible] generally exhibit an unfavorable, and even repulsive as- [illegible] Yet by giving some license to the imagination it might be supposed [illegible] notwithstanding their location and external aspect were so forbid- [illegible] the internal appearance would be more cheerful and pleasant, or at [illegible] the arrangement and construction within would be comforta-

bly adapted to the purposes which the school house was intended to fulfil. But an actual inspection of by far the greatest number of the school houses in the State, by County Superintendents, discloses the unpleasant fact that ordinarily the interior does not correspond with the exterior, or if possible is still worse. A very large proportion of these buildings throughout the State must be set down as in a miserable condition. The melancholy fact is established by the concurrent report of all our County Superintendents, that in every quarter of the State they are, as a class, altogether unsuited to their high purposes. Probably nine-tenths of them are located upon the line of the highway; and as the geographical center of the district usually determines their situation, aside from the relation with the road, it is a rare chance that one is not placed in an exposed, unpleasant and uncomfortable spot. In some cases, especially in villages, their location seems to be determined by the worth, or rather by the *worthlessness* of the ground on which they stand, that being selected which is of the least value for any other purpose. Seldom or never do we see our school houses surrounded by trees or shrubbery, to serve the purpose which they might serve so well, that of delighting the eye, gratifying the taste, and contributing to the physical comfort, by shielding from the scorching sun of summer, and breaking the bleak winds of winter. And from buildings thus situated and thus exposed, pupils are turned out into the streets for their sports, and for other purposes still more indispensable. What better results could be expected under such a system than that our "girls should become hoydens and our boys blackguards?" Indeed it would be a happy event, if in no case results still more melancholy and disastrous than this were realized.

"But this notice of *ordinary* deficiencies does not cover the whole ground of error in regard to the situation of school houses. In some cases they are brought into close connection with positive nuisances. In a case which has fallen under the Superintendent's own personal observation, one side of the school house forms part of the fence of a hog-yard, into which, during the summer the calves from an extensive dairy establishment have been thrown from time to time (disgusting and revolting spectacle!) to be rent and devoured before the eyes of teacher and pupils, except such portions of the mutilated and mangled carcasses as were left by the animals to go to decay, as they lay exposed to the sun and storm. It is true the windows on the side of the building adjoining the yard were generally observed to be closed, in order to shut out the almost insupportable stench which arose from the decomposing remains. But this closure of windows could in no great degree "abate the nuisance;" for not a breath of air could enter the house from any direction but it must come saturated with the disgusting and sickening odor that loaded the atmosphere around. It needs no professional learning to tell the deleterious influence upon health, which must be exerted by such an agency operating for continuous hours. Such cases, it is hoped and believed, are exceedingly rare. But it is much to be feared that the usual exemption enjoyed by teachers and pupils, from even such outrages upon their senses and sensibilities as have been detailed, is to be attributed to the fact that

such arrangements are not ordinarily convenient, rather than to any prevailing conviction of their impropriety, or any general and settled purpose to avoid them. The case is named as at least strong evidence that the pertinency of considerations, involving a regard either to taste, comfort, or even health itself, is generally overlooked or disregarded, in fixing upon a site for a school house. At all events these purposes are all *exposed* to be violated under the prevailing neglect of districts to secure the possession of sufficient ground for a yard around the school house. But it would not seem necessary to urge, beyond the bare suggestion, the importance of providing for school houses a comfortable location, a sufficient yard and play ground, a wood house and other out-buildings, a convenient access to water, and a surrounding of the premises with shade trees which might serve for shelter, as well as delight the eye, and aid to render the school house, what it should be, one of the most attracting and delightful places of resort upon the face of the earth. It should be such that when the child shall have changed into the gray-haired man, and his memory wanders back through the long vista of vanished years, seeking for some object on which it may repose, this shall be the spot where it shall love to rest.

"In the construction of the school house, embracing its material, style of architecture, and finish, as little care and taste are exhibited, as might be expected from the indifference manifested in regard to its location and surrounding circumstances. Cheapness of construction seems, in most cases, to be the great governing principle, which decides upon its materials, its form, and all its internal arrangements. No complaint on this score could justly be made, if the general condition of these buildings were clearly and fairly attributed to want of ability. But while our other edifices, both public and private, have improved in elegance, convenience and taste, with the increasing wealth of our citizens, our school houses linger in the rear and bear the impress of a former age. In this respect,

> "That which in days of yore we were
> We at the present moment are."

"Low walls might be instanced as *one* of the prevailing defects in school house architecture. The quantity of air contained in a school room of the usual height, is so small as to be soon exhausted of its oxygen; and the dullness, headache and depression which succeed to this result, are but too well known and too often felt, although they may fail of being attributed to their true cause; and why should our children be robbed of a comfortable supply of that pure and wholesome air, with which our Creator, in the largeness and richness of his bounty, has surrounded the earth and filled the sky? But if the condition of the houses is such, as in part to prevent the injurious effects arising from a deficiency of pure air, by means of broken windows and gaping crevices, then colds, coughs, and as the ultimate and crowning result consumption, (and of this disease, what thousands of cases have had their foundations laid in the school house!) must be the consequence of this sort of exposure. This is *true in regard to all* classes and conditions of pupils. But it should be

distinctly kept in mind, although it is ordinarily overlooked and forgotten, that children accustomed to be comfortably protected against cold or vicissitudes of temperature, at home, will inevitably suffer the more when exposed to them in the school house. And here is an additional reason why these structures should be improved, as our dwelling houses are generally becoming more comfortable.

"But there is not room here for details, not even to exhibit *this* topic in all its important bearings. And it has been thus hinted at only to prove that the general charge of faulty construction is not wholly unfounded.

"It was the purpose of the Superintendent to discuss at some length, the pernicious influence exerted, both upon the health of pupils, and their progress in learning, by the miserable structures in which the State abounds, but the extent of the remarks already made precludes it. One cause of the prevailing fault in regard to the construction and internal arrangement of school houses, doubtless, is the want of proper models. Districts, when about erecting a school house, cannot well do more than follow the examples before them. To form the plan of a proper school house, one well adapted to all the various ends which should be sought, such as the convenience, comfort and health of pupils, convenience for supervision and conduct of the school, and facilities for the most successful prosecution of study, would require such an extent of observation and so full an acquaintance with the laws of health, of mind and morals, and then such a skill in designing a structure in which all the necessary conditions should be observed and secured, that it would be unreasonable to expect that a district could command them, without an opportunity to avail itself of the experience and observation of others. But districts have almost universally felt this lack of guidance. But it is believed that hereafter, information on the subject of school house architecture, will be more accessible; and if, as a step, some one district in every town in the State, would avail itself of the necessary information and make a vigorous effort to secure the erection of a well located, well planned and well constructed school house, they would perform an act of high public beneficence, as well as confer upon themselves an inestimable blessing. And shall not one or two years realize the accomplishment of this noble purpose? What district will lead the van?"

During Mr. Eaton's whole term of office it was found necessary to continue to stir the public mind upon the subject, and his subsequent reports, as well as those of the County Superintendents, abound in discussions of school houses. And no better service has ever been done to the cause of education in the State than was accomplished by those faithful men, although the fruits of that labor were not in the matter of school houses immediately apparent. At the beginning of my own official labors, as Secretary, wherever I found an improved class of school buildings, I invariably ascertained, upon inquiry, that they were the results of an agitation of the public mind first created by the efforts of the State and County Superintendents. And these results are traceable to the present day, and it is not exaggeration to say that in this direction alone the State has been abundantly compensated for all her outlay under the system of State and *County Superintendents*.

Great and varied improvements have been made in the character of school buildings, but the movement has been an extremely slow one, and confined rather to particular localities. A very large proportion of the school houses of Vermont are now entirely unfit for the purposes for which they were intended, and all movements towards their improvement are met with great and stubborn opposition. I have in the Institutes and general educational meetings so often presented this matter, that while I deem the subject one of commanding importance, a thorough and searching discussion of which must be had not only occasionally, but frequently, I am disposed to call in the assistance of other friends of education to some extent, here.

Were an accurate and entirely faithful picture to be given of the condition of many of the school houses now in actual use in our state, it would scarcely receive credit from any one, although there are few towns in the whole State, that could not furnish existing school houses that would tax the genius of a Cruikshank to caricature.

And this state of things is not at all peculiar to our State, as will appear from the following extract from a most excellent work which I take pleasure now, as at various times before, to commend—I refer to "Johonnott's Country School Houses," published in New York.

In that work the author says:

## "FAULTS OF OUR PRESENT SCHOOL HOUSES.

"The past few years have witnessed a great change in public opinion with regard to the construction of school houses. Many of the worst features of the past age have been, in some measure, remedied; but there is still much to be accomplished in this respect. In most parts of the country, school houses are still deficient in the following respects:

1. They are the most unsightly buildings in the district. A traveller, passing through a section of country, can generally distinguished the school house by these characteristics. It is situated in a forlorn and lonely place. It exhibits every mark of neglect and dilapidation. It is entirely exposed to the depredations of estray cattle and unruly boys, by being situated in the street, and not protected by a fence. It is unpainted, and nearly half unglazed. Its style is nondescript, being too small for a barn, too deficient in the elements of just proportion for a dwelling, too lonely and too much neglected for the out-building of a farm, and, in short, too repulsive in all respects, and exhibiting too many marks of the most parsimonious economy to be anything but a school house.

2. They are not large enough to accommodate the pupils that attend the school. The room is so confined that the scholars are forced into uncomfortable and inconvenient proximity to each other. Their work is interrupted, and their personal rights violated. The young, the weak, and the innocent are forced into the immediate atmosphere of coarseness and impurity, without a possibility of counteracting influences. Again, the ceilings are so low that there is a very inadequate supply of fresh air, and, as a consequence of all this, unavoidable damage is incurred

by both body and soul. Proper discipline, in such schools, becomes a matter of impossibility, as the inexorable laws of nature oppose and and render nugatory the teacher's work.

3. No proper means of ventilation are provided. The quantity of air, limited at first, shortly becomes impure, and there are no means of changing it. A poisoning process then commences, the virulence of which is just in propertion to the tightness of the room. A badly built or dilapidated school-house here becomes a positive blessing, by preventing the exclusion of pure air from without. Besides the injury to health, this vitiated atmosphere actually obviates, by its stupefying action on the brain, the purposes of the school.

4. The buildings are miserably put together. The foundations are so poorly laid that they soon tumble, and the superstructures are racked to pieces, or stand askew. The frames and finish are of the cheapest kind, and soon the winds find their way through them in every direction. The desks and benches are ingeniously inconvenient and uncomfortable, producing pains and aches innumerable. Most people of the present generation have a vivid and painful recollection of the seats of our old school houses, without backs, and often too high to permit the feet to touch the floor. The suffering and weariness so produced were almost equal to the punishment of exposure at the pillory, or confinement in the stocks, bestowed in olden times upon criminals. The whole construction of the building, both external and internal, was such that it merited and received no repair, and soon lapsed into a mass of ruin.

5. Yards or play-grounds for the children are scarcely ever provided. Even in country places, where land is very cheap, the schoolhouse is frequently—and in the older States, *most* frequently—placed directly in the street, generally at a corner where two roads meet. Not one inch of ground is set apart for the use of the pupils. There is no place for recreation or privacy, but all is exposed to the public eye. The street is the only play-ground, and filth, within doors and without, is the consequence. With such an arrangement, it is impossible to inculcate those lessons of neatness and refinement which are among the most important objects of education.

6. A majority of schoolhouses are destitute of the necessary outbuildings. In many cases there is no privy at all; and in many others there is but one for a large school of both sexes. A man in a Christian land who would erect a house for his home without a privy, would be considered worse than a heathen; yet this is often done in the country school districts, although in a school both sexes are brought together without the constant purifying and restraining influences which belong to the household. Every feeling of refinement, and even of decency, is outraged by the exposure thus induced, and in some measure the same results ensue from having but one small, exposed privy for a large school.

7. In fine, it is the united testimony of superintendents, committees of investigation, and boards of school visitors, that in many places the pupils in school are worse provided for in all things belonging to comfort, convenience, and the cultivation of good manners and morals, than the inmates of our pauper houses, or the prisoners in our penitentiaries."

As I have already stated, decided and manifold improvements in the style of school architecture, in our State, are everywhere perceptible, and wherever found are recognizable as the natural and almost inevitable results of strong local agitation upon the subject, and while they are full of encouragement as to the progress heretofore made, are to be received as stimulants to future exertion.

But notwithstanding these many indications of improvement, the descriptions of faulty and improper houses above quoted, as existing in other States, and in this State at a former period, will be recognized by the observant as exactly applicable to many schoolhouses now in use in Vermont.

The inferiority of the buildings appropriated to the purposes of education, to the dwelling houses, and public buildings devoted to other purposes, is the one point in reference to the matter that strikes one with surprise. That schoolhouses, good or bad, should be only as good or as bad as the generality of adjacent and neighboring dwellings, need not excite very much wonder. But it is, and to the thoughtful always will be, a matter for wonder, that kind and loving parents who delight to improve and beautify their own homes, that thus they may increase the enjoyment of their children and promote their improvement, should be willing, in common with their neighbors of the same disposition, to tolerate as a home for their children in school hours, a building which not one of the circle would accept as a home for the same children in all the other hours of their youth.

Thus, it will often be found in our State, that the meanest schoolhouses in the vicinity will be in the very neighborhoods that are the best able to build new ones; and thus the inhabitants stigmatize themselves by the continued existence, and occupation for school purposes, of an edifice inferior in every respect to the dwellings of the major portion of the community.

As a people, we fail clearly to perceive and fully to appreciate the real grandeur of a State organization for the education of every one of its children, and led away and provoked by the practical details necessary in the application of the State school system to the wants of individual localities, we often are tempted to look upon public schools as simple asylums; as places of resort for the children of the poor and needy, and grumblingly submit to the requisite taxation, but desire it to be as small as can be consistent with a decent compliance with the law of the land.

When, as the result of powerful and persistent discussion, the public mind is brought to look upon common schools not as necessary burdens, but as the reliable springs of enduring intelligence and prosperity; when the State organism for the education of its children shall be recognized, as it deserves to be, and as it will be, as the chiefest glory of our republican institutions, all mean and niggardly notions about schools will disappear, and our dingy and dirty school buildings, that here and there mar the general aspect of Vermont, will be known no more.

When that day comes, schools will be considered, not as merely benevolent or charitable institutions, but as most indispensable safeguards

of every republican commonwealth, monuments of its true strength, without which the existence of a democratic State is impossible.

Again, we fail to apply to schools and schoolhouses a principle of otherwise universal application. The potency with which the circumstances, the surroundings and the associations of early childhood tell upon the future character is admitted by all, and by none more unhesitatingly than many men who regularly resist every effort to rebuild or repair the schoolhouse in their own district. The general principle is acknowledged, for it cannot well be denied, but its special application is ignored.

With regard to the effect of the architecture of our schoolhouses in its educational influence, the author of "Country School Houses" remarks—

Ordinary use is not the only value of buildings. They may be so constructed as to appeal to the higher sentiments, and render important aid in developing the better and finer feelings of our nature. This is the proper province of architecture, and the work of the architect is to so fashion our buildings and arrange their details, that while they may answer the purposes of their erection, they may, at the same time, satisfy that love of the beautiful, the symmetrical, and the harmonious, which is innate in the human heart. The faculty of the mind which conceives this sentiment is what we call *taste*, and it is one which needs constant and systematic cultivation.

In this country but little attention has yet been given to those things which elevate and refine. The entire energies of our people were early and exclusively devoted to the rude task of subduing the wilderness and providing the necessaries of life. They could bestow no time on pursuits which did not directly conduce to the simplest ends of human existence. Consequently their descendants are a prompt, resolute, and vigorous race, with more determination to do, and more energy in doing, than any the world has ever seen before. But the arts of refinement which were, at first, through absolute necessity, neglected, are now habitually despised or disregarded. No people on earth who have attained to an equal degree of intellectual and moral culture, evince so little taste and refinement as ourselves.

We begin, however, to discern the dawning of a better day. We begin to feel that there are wants in our nature that are not to be satisfied by mere material appliances. We begin to appreciate the beautiful, and its influence in developing our higher powers. Evidences of this change of public sentiment may be found in the attention now paid to art; in the patronage beginning to be bestowed upon artists; and in the improvement of the architecture of public buildings and private residences in many parts of the country. The results of this improved sentiment re-act upon the community, softening down the sharp features of our national character, multiplying those little amenities which give grace, beauty and dignity to our life, and even aiding to develop the Christian virtues of faith and charity.

Numerous and potent are the influences furnished by literature for the cultivation of the taste; but impressions more vivid and lasting may be made by the presentation to the senses of sublime or beautiful objects, such as natural scenery, landscape improved by art, and the best productions of sculpture, painting and architecture.

Of the various influences which tend to mature and refine the taste, we have occasion, in this work, to refer only to those of architecture. The importance and necessity of this art, to the great work of education, we shall endeavor to show.

Architecture, primarily, deals only with forms which address the eye. It embodies ideas of proportion, symmetry, variety, harmony, and unity.

By proportion is meant that due relation which should exist between the different dimensions of a building in order to convey the idea of correctness. We frequently see buildings in which this principle is violated, and are pained at the want of taste so prominently displayed. Buildings too long for their height, too high for their length, or too wide for either, appear to be the "rule," rather than the "exception;" yet a well-proportioned structure is immediately and almost universally recognized as such, and cannot fail to afford general satisfaction and delight.

Symmetry requires a proper balance of parts. The regular placing of doors and windows, and the disposal of all the details, so that none shall seem out of place, are in obedience to this principle.

Variety is the opposite of monotony, and would induce us to relieve in some manner blank walls, and to break up long horizontal lines, so as to produce an agreeable effect, like that made by a diversified landscape, or a number of views in nature, each differing from the other. This would lead us also to avoid sameness in a range of buildings, and, within certain limits, to give diversity to details. It would forbid the erection of those vast square or oblong piles of brick and mortar, which now so frequently burden, without adorning, the face of the earth.

Harmony may be defined as the limit of variety. It is that peculiar relation which all the parts should have to each other, producing in the mind a sense of completeness and adaptation. It allows no incongruities, and indulges in no conceits. Harmony in architecture, as in music, so arranges and blends the different parts, that each seems an indispensable element of a perfect whole.

Unity refers to the evident design which pervades the structure; the one idea, which has not only harmonized the parts with each other, but adapted the whole to its uses. In accordance with this principle, while all the other laws of taste in architecture should be observed, they should be subordinated to the object of the construction.

As the mind becomes familiar with beautiful objects, and with the laws of beauty, its sensibility to moral excellence is cultivated, the manners are conformed to the principles of harmony, and the effects produced upon the whole man are of the most beneficial and lasting character. The influence ascribed by Plato, in his *Republic*, to a musical education, may be predicated with equal truth of a judicious culture in this department of art. It is essential, he says, "because it makes rhythm and harmony to settle deeply in the inner soul, and take strong hold of it, carrying with them comeliness, and making a man comely-minded. Also, because one so matured will have the quickest perception of all faults and imperfections in art or nature, and, regarding them with just aversion, will admire and love the beautiful. This he will receive with joy into his soul, will feed on it, and assimilate his own nature to its beauty, will learn to censure and hate deformity, *even in early youth, while yet incapable of understanding the reason why*, and when the reason comes will embrace it gladly, as a familiar thing."

In those countries where architecture has reached its highest development, taste and refinement exert their greatest influence. As an instance of the refining effect of beautiful objects, the fact might be mentioned that, in many of the old countries, sculptured decorations in architecture have remained for ages uninjured, save by the action of the elements; and that even after the edifices they once adorned have fallen into ruin, a feeling of veneration in the hearts of the people seems to have shielded these trophies of art from profanation.

In our more logical and practical communities, the destructive passion would be restrained by no such sentiment; and not twenty-four hours would elapse after an old building of celebrity had been abandoned, before fragments would be chipped off for mementoes, or pounded to pieces, to satisfy the analytical spirit of some ruthless traveler. Beauty of form, however, seems, in some measure, to afford protection. An old or mean-looking building, deserted or unoccupied, is a target for boys, and even for children of a larger growth; and every one feels an instinctive desire to rid the earth of such deformity. But a complete and beautiful structure generally enjoys a longer, if not an entire exemption from injury. When in really and universally cultivated communities, there will be no danger of the wanton desecration of beautiful objects.

Little or no attention has ever been paid to the elements of beauty in the schoolhouse architecture of this country, as the poor apologies for schoolhouses, so common throughout the older States, painfully show. They seem to have been erected simply for shelter, and with the smallest possible cost at the outset; to call it cheapness or economy would be a misnomer. They stand as vile offenses against good taste, and ugly excrescences upon the landscape. They make no appeal to the higher sentiments, and consequently no effort can preserve the building or fixtures from disfigurement and ruin. Every teacher knows the difficulty of protecting a schoolhouse from the ubiquitous and all-devouring Yankee jack-knife! The result is that the building, unsightly when new, becomes more so through the rudeness which its very appearance stimulates. The busy fingers of time may soften its outlines, and spread over its surface sober tints of brown; but the innate ugliness of the structure defies all efforts to make it other than a monstrosity.

In the erection of every schoolhouse particular care should be taken to observe the rules of taste as regards form. In our country districts, where a small and plain building only is demanded, we need to consider proportion and symmetry alone; the other principles of architecture applying chiefly to larger and more pretending structures. If this is done, if our schoolhouses all conform to these two fundamental laws, they can

not fail of becoming strong educational influences in the right direction. The advantages, in this regard, of obeying the principles of architecture in the construction of schoolhouses, may be summed up in a few words.

1. If the building is an object of beauty, the very sight of it inspires emotions of pleasure.
2. It adorns and beautifies the landscape of which it forms a part.
3. It becomes an attractive place to children, and does not repel them, as now, by its deformity.
4. It practically teaches ideas of proportion and symmetry, and new and exalted conceptions of beauty of form.
5. It throws over property the shield of beauty, and so checks, and finally eradicates, the rudeness which is stimulated to destructiveness by deformity.
6. It forms one of those influences which have most power over the heart and affections, directly aiding the teacher in the most difficult and important part of his work.

In adorning and decorating schoolhouses, however, care should be taken lest the cost exceed the means or inclination of those for whom it is built, neither should any mere ornament interfere with health or comfort.

Let this principle be remembered by all. "That schoolhouses, however small, should never be built without conforming to those general principles of taste which are universally recognized by cultivated people," so that if they do not exert influence in elevating taste, at least they will have the negative excellence of not violating it. The work of education in those higher departments which recognize beauty, both of forms and morals, and the subtile and mysterious relations which exist between the two, at best is an onerous and difficult one, and every external influence which assists in forwarding it becomes a positive benefit.

Great weight is lent to such reasoning by the experience of each individual. When in those hours of solemn self-examination, which surely come to all who are neither brutish nor insensate, we inquire into the scope and value of our own intellectual attainments, and compare ourselves as we really are, with ourselves as we consciously feel we might have been, we become painfully convinced of the existence of some radical defect in our own culture. We become aware of our failure in reaping even a tithe of the rich harvest of intellectual acquisition that has been fully within our reach. Having breathed an atmosphere instinct with literary stimulus, surrounded with the thousand appliances for self-culture so characteristic of the age, born and bred in the midst of a flood of intellectual light, we have intellectually failed as individuals. That sound, hearty and in-wrought love of knowledge and its pursuit, the very essence of scholarly culture and without which true scholarship is impossible, has never been with us that unfailing guide to higher and better aspirations for pure and lofty attainments, whose ministrations we readily believe to be little short of angelic. Thus conscious of failure, we look back over our own lives, and find our faint attachment to knowledge, or sometimes even our positive disgust at the effort necessary in its pursuit, dating far back in our lives and beginning in the early days of youth, and unmistakably attributable as a natural result, to the tame and lifeless instruction then given us, and to the unpleasant and sometimes hateful surroundings and associations that are connected with school life.

As a strong and steady love of knowledge for its own sake and a true appreciation of its rich gifts is the most valuable possession possible to the student, and the most reliable harbinger of his future success; so the reverse of the proposition is true, and a distaste for scholarly pursuits is an insurmountable obstacle to intellectual advancement.

Herein mainly is the reason of the very great importance that attaches to the character of the school house and surroundings. Where the house is old, dingy and dilapidated, destitute of any inclosure for the convenience and recreation of the children, and without sheds and other necessary out-buildings, it cannot be looked upon by those attending with any feeling of attachment or respect. The impression it leaves upon the minds and hearts of the children is dreary and distasteful, and often positively hateful; and directly from this the feeling of disgust is likely to embrace within its scope everything connected with the school in particular, or with the pursuit of knowledge generally. And thus the schools failing to stir the minds of the children and animate them with a hungering and thirsting after knowledge, they start in life without any hearty appreciation of either the pleasure or duty involved in the continuous efforts for self-culture; and soon the cares and business of life engross the attention, and comparative ignorance or superficiality necessarily result; for lacking the strong determination that otherwise would grow out of a strong attachment for study and thought, and would insure indefinite improvement, they yield to indolence and mental incompetency.

There are various economical considerations connected with the subject of constructing school houses that do not often receive the prominence which they deserve. It does not necessarily cost any more to build a neat, tasteful and convenient house, than to built one that shall have neither of these characteristics, and therefore the allegation of great expense, so often made, has no more direct application to desirable and elegant school houses, than to those which are not. Schools, like families and individuals, have certain requirements of convenience and necessity, and, as in all other cases, edifices erected for the use of schools should possess a special adaptation to the peculiar requirements of the schools.

In the want of any systematic and intelligent adaptation to the special purposes for which they were designed, the chief deficiencies of our school houses are to be found.

With regard to the principles to be observed in the provision of school houses, and the general rules for their external and internal arrangement, the following remarks from the same work—"Johonnot's Country School Houses"—are more to the point than any thing I have seen elsewhere.

From Johonnot's "Country Schoolhouses," Part II.

## Principles to be observed.

### Chapter I.

### *Health.*

The preservation of health should be considered a matter of prime importance in the erection of every school-house. Everything else, including cost, comfort, and convenience, should be subordinated to this. Unless our children can be educated in a way compatible with the preservation of their health, it were better at once to tear down our school-houses, and abolish our whole school system. Minds refined, however highly, in broken down and sickly bodies, are of very little practical value in *this* world.

To accomplish the end so much to be desired in this regard, great care should be taken in the following particulars.

1. The Location. This should be at a distance from all sources of malaria. The foul breath of decaying vegetation, or of stagnant water, becomes a fruitful source of disease and death. Unseen and unnoticed it insidiously does its work, and spreads the atmosphere of the charnel house as far as its influence extends. The diseases seeming to be epidemic, which sometimes break out in schools, may often be traced to some neighboring swamp or marsh, or heap of rotting vegetables. Some manufactures also generate disagreeable gases, which, if breathed for any considerable time, are deleterious in the extreme. The school house should be placed at a distance of these sources from disease.

Again; it should be situated away from the noise and dust of the street. There is scarcely anything more annoying or unwholesome than the clouds of dust which, upon a dry summer's day, are driven along the highway, covering and clogging everything in their path. Let the location, if possible, be upon a hill-side, where it may be free from these annoyances, and where the purest air is poured out in unstinted measure. For the *moral* health of the pupils, let the school house be placed at a distance from places where scenes of brutality or debauchery are ever exhibited.

2. The Size of the School-Room. This is a consideration of great importance. Every pupil should have sufficient room to sit and move without being confined or jostled by any one else; and there should be sufficient space in the room for a large reservoir of air. Packing children close together, so that the breath and atmosphere of each is shared with all his neighbors, is an unmitigated evil. Every child has a right to his own personality, and his share of uncontaminated air; and whatever deprives him of these, becomes an outrage. This is often done however, by the closeness of contact with others, into which he is forced, and by the limited capacity of the apartment in which he is compelled to sit.

3. Proper Means of Ventilation. Within a few years past, much has been said and written upon this subject. Public attention has been called to its necessity and importance in school-books, in lectures, and in treatises; yet even now we often find its most obvious principles disregarded in the construction of school houses, churches and other public buildings. Custom and habit are so strong that they ignore and violate natural laws even after they have been pointed out and demonstrated. Both the limits and design of this work forbid a thorough discussion of the subject, and only a few of the more obvious and important considerations will be suggested.

The vitality of the air is exhausted by breathing, and a constant supply of fresh air is necessary to preserve life and health. Air, absolutely pure, is essential to the highest degree of health. Rendered partially impure by breathing, it will sustain life, but then all the machinery of the body becomes clogged, and the brain is so enfeebled as to be enable to per orm its functions. Every person contaminates, and renders unfit for use, at least five cubic feet of air per minute. A school-room, twenty by thirty feet in size, and ten feet high, would contain six thousand cubic feet of air. Forty scholars would consume this, and render it unfit for sustaining the bodily functions, in just thirty minutes. Yet a larger number are often confined in a smaller room, and during a much longer time, without any possibility of a change of air. The effect of this is to excite disease and impair the more delicate organs of the body. The most virulent poisón could scarcely be more fatal. The only remedy is, to provide means for the rapid and frequent change of the air in the room, throwing out that which is contaminated and impure, and replacing it with that which is fresh from without. The means of accomplishing this will be fully explained in another chapter.

We content ourselves, for the present, with a single emphatic observation. *In every school-house without proper means of ventilation, there is a slow and subtile poison which enters the blood and brains of the pupils, and saps the very foundation of life. There can be no escape from its deleterious influences, for exposure to it is a violation of one of the laws of God.*

4. The Construction of Seats and Benches. For the health of the pupil, as well as for his comfort, the height of the seat ought to be so graduated as to enable him to set his feet squarely upon the floor. A contrary custom often produces much suffering and a distortion of the lower limbs. Seats without backs are also to be deprecated. To relieve the overstrained muscles, unnatural postures are assumed, and a crooked spine is a very probable consequence.

5. Proper Attention to Cleanliness. It scarcely comes within the province of this work, to descant upon the importance to health of keeping the person and clothing clean, yet it is a subject intimately connected with that of the wholesale ordering of the school-room. As health cannot be preserved without habits of personal neatness, so it is useless to inculcate these upon pupils, while the dirty condition of the room they are obliged to occupy forbids the acquisition or preservation of those habits.

Besides, the fine dust which accumulates in a school-room, and which is thrown into the air by every motion, is breathed into the lungs, and there acts mechanically upon the delicate little air-cells, producing irritation, which may end in inflammation and consumption. Methods of preserving cleanliness will be noticed in succeeding chapters.

---

## Chapter II.

### *External Arrangements.*

The external arrangements of the school may be noticed under the following heads:

I. The Lot.—A large and commodious school lot is a matter of prime necessity. Without it, some of the most essential ends of education are impossible to be attained. A little attention on the part of Trustees and Committees, will secure an ample lot at very little expense. When public attention has been sufficiently turned to the importance of this subject, it will be a comparatively easy matter to secure the donation of a school lot, or at least, the purchase of one at a small price. About one acre of ground is necessary for our ordinary country districts. If such a lot can be obtained, a schoolhouse should never be erected upon a smaller one. It sometimes happens that the owners of lands near the center of the district refuse to sell it at any price for school purposes. Such narrowness and illiberality is at present, in most of our States, without remedy. But we think, as popular education is now recognized as one of the functions of the State, it would be well to provide for taking the land at an appraisal by disinterested persons, as land for highways, railroads, and other public purposes, is now taken. A law allowing the Trustees of districts and the town authorities to locate the schoolhouse lot, with or without the consent of the owner of the land, would be a highly salutary one, and would prevent a great amount of private and social strife, while rendering an important service to the schools.

If no natural obstacles oppose, the center of the district would seem to be the best place for the schoolhouse; this center having reference, of course, to population as well as distance. If an acre of land is taken, perhaps it might most conveniently be laid out in a plat sixteen rods front and ten deep. Any other form might be adopted, and under some circumstances, another might be preferable. Of the situation of the lot, in reference to scenery, &c., more will be said in the chapter upon ornamental grounds.

2. Position of the Building.—In a lot sixteen rods by ten, the house should stand very nearly in the center. This would be at a sufficient distance from the street to avoid all noise and dust, with room enough in the rear for the necessary out-buildings. It would also divide the yard into two parts, for boys and girls. In any lot the house should be placed in the middle as to width, and at a distance from the street. The front of the house should always face the street, so that the out-

buildings may be thrown into the back-ground, not only in reference to the house, but to the street also.

3. Outside Structure.—The details of this will be more particularly noticed in the description of the plans. In most cases, it will be observed, a double porch, with separate entrances for boys and girls, has been provided, and this arrangement is regarded as highly important. It prevents the possibility of improper communication between the two sexes, while passing in and out of the school-room. The room in the lobby is also used as a clothes-room, at a manifest saving of expense.

4. Wood-House.—In most of the plans proposed, the wood-house is placed directly in the rear, so that a portion of it may serve for a back hall. This arrangement contributes to harmony of external appearance, and prevents the out-door air from blowing directly into the school-room. Thus serving a double purpose, the wood-house is almost indispensable. A basement, however, might be prepared for the storage of fuel.

5. Privies.—With the yard divided by a high, substantial board fence, running from the back side of the wood-house to the rear fence, two privies are indispensable. In Designs I. and II., an arrangement is given for a double privy, directly in the rear of the wood-house, but this arrangement is objectionable, unless plenty of water can be obtained to flow through the vault into a sewer. Even if a double privy is decided upon, it would be better to place it at a greater distance from the house, so as to preclude the possibility of its becoming offensive. But any double privy is objectionable; although so arranged as to shut out the intrusive gaze, it cannot be made entirely impervious to sound; and the vicious may take advantage of its construction to outrage the feelings of the pure minded, without the fear of detection. A better way would be to separate the privies entirely, and place them near the middle of the remote ends of their respective yards. The entrances should be upon the rear side, or else a screen should be erected to shield them from observation. The expense of two vaults and two buildings would of course be somewhat greater than that of a single one; but the obvious good resulting from the plan, would more than compensate for the difference.

6. Walks.—That is a very false economy which refuses or neglects to furnish the necessary walks in and about the school premises. The country schoolhouse is proverbial for filth. Generally but a step removed from the carriage-path in the street, and without walks of any description anywhere in the vicinity, except a single path of the native soil, the wonder is that it is not more, rather than less, offensive. During some seasons of the year the children must wade through mud and water to reach the school, and not one foot of dry space is provided where they can cleanse themselves until they enter the house itself. The consequence is, that dirt is everywhere, and tidiness impossible. To remedy this as much as possible, arrangements should be made to preclude the necessity of getting into the mud, within the school-yard, and to enable the scholars to remove it from their feet, when coming in from the road. A plank or gravel walk should be laid from the front gate to the front door. The steps at the door should be large and commodious. These steps, and perhaps also a portion of the walk, should be provided with scrapers. A

strip of band-iron, nailed upon the edge of a plank twelve feet long, so that the edge of the iron may rise half an inch above the surface of the plank, will make an excellent and economical scraper, and accommodate a dozen or more pupils at the same time. Plank walks should also extend from the back entrances to the privies, and perhaps around the sides of the schoolhouse.

7. Fence,—The school lot can never be kept in order unless it is enclosed by a good and substantial fence; this fence should be built of good materials, and put up in a solid manner. A picket, or a post-and-rail fence, would answer every purpose. The gates should be built strong and heavy, and so arranged as to shut of themselves. It might be well to set posts within the gates, in such a manner that cattle could not get in, even if the gates should be left open. The fence that divides the yards should be of matched stuff, and from eight to ten feet high, faced on the boys' side. The wood-house door should open into the boys' yard. In a succeeding chapter the subject of out-houses will be treated more at large.

---

## Chapter III.

### *Internal Arrangements.*

The internal structure of the schoolhouse may be considered under the heads of Size, Shape of School-Room, Side-Rooms, Seats and Desks, and Miscellaneous Suggestions.

1. Size of School-Room.—A school-room should always be sufficiently large to furnish each pupil with space enough for a desk and chair, and for free and unobstructed movement. There should be room for the personal accommodation of the teacher, and for purposes of recitation. The height of the smallest school-room should never be less than twelve feet, and this should be increased to sixteen feet in the larger houses. Comfort and convenience, in sitting and moving about, depend upon the area of the room, the quantity of air upon the area and height combined. In the plans furnished in this work, eighteen feet area, and nearly two hundred and fifty cubic feet of air, have been appropriated to each pupil.

2. Shape of the Room.—Of all rectangular forms, a square room will give the greatest amount of space, in proportion to the extent of outside walls. Many teachers, however, prefer a room one-fourth or one-fifth longer than its width; and probably no better form can be devised than this, or one between this and square. When the parallelogram is used, it will be found more convenient to leave the space for the teacher's desk, and recitation benches, upon the end, instead of the side. The octagonal form is thought by some to be peculiarly adapted to school purposes, and specimens have been presented in this work.

3. Side-Rooms.—In every schoolhouse there should be a separate room for depositing hats, bonnets, etc., and in larger houses, another for library and apparatus. For the sake of economy and convenience, in the

[illegible] two grades, the porch and hall is arranged so as to serve the double purpose of entry-way and cloak-room. In the smaller houses, a single porch will be sufficient; but in the larger ones, a double porch should be provided, so that there may be a cloak room for the use to which it is to be put and a separate apartment for the sexes. These rooms should be amply provided with hooks and shelves. In the smaller houses, a closet for books and apparatus, answering also for recitals, can be constructed upon one side of the school-room. If the latter designation is the plan, the room should be arranged to accommodate more pupils than any one teacher can instruct, so additional room for recitals should be provided. A separate room for the teacher to occupy during recesses and intermissions, and a privy to each, should be connected with the entries and halls of the two grades. But we fear this reasonable luxury will not be realized until public sentiment, with respect to the minimum provisions made therein for pupils, is greatly elevated. Every wood-house should be so arranged as to form a back entry-way as well as a store-room.

4. *Seats and Desks.*—Many methods for seating schoolhouses have been proposed, and many experiments have been made, to economise room and to secure the greatest convenience. It now seems to be generally conceded that the best arrangement is that of single or double desks, placed in parallel rows, with aisles between of sufficient width to permit passage. By this plan the pupils all face the way, and the teacher can see them all at a glance. When the seats are arranged upon the sides of the room, with the open space in the center, this is impossible, and discipline is almost out of the question. Double desks are more economical than single ones, as they cost less, and take up less space in the room.

*The desks should always be so placed that the pupils may face the entrance.* The reasons for this arrangement are obvious. The entrance and exit of pupils or visitors will be sure to attract attention, and it is impossible to prevent this by any proper system of discipline. If the backs of the pupils are towards the entrance, they will turn about whenever the door opens or closes, presenting an unseemly appearance, as well as outwardly interfering with the business of study and recitation. This habit of turning, once formed, will be practiced upon occasions, to the great annoyance of the teacher and the subversion of discipline. Again, when strangers or others visit the school, or call at the school-room for any purpose, the teacher is obliged to receive them at the rear end of the room, instead of in front, which is awkward and inconvenient. It is as though the entrance to the parlor of a private house should be made through the kitchen. With the pupils facing the entrance, when the door opens, a glance is sufficient, without change of posture or suspension of business, to satisfy the most vagrant curiosity. The teacher can receive his visitors at once, and in the proper place, without parade and without difficulty. Finally, the door or doors leading to the wood-house or back yard should be in the rear of the room, and this can only be when the front of the room is next the front entrance. The author can speak feelingly upon this subject, having had experience in both methods, and retaining a vivid remembrance of the constant annoyance to which he was

subjected in the rooms where the pupils were seated with their backs towards the entrance.

The space in front of the desks should be sufficiently large for purposes of recitation; this in school-rooms of ordinary size, would be about ten feet; in small rooms perhaps a little less. A space of two or three feet in width should be left in the rear of the room for classes upon special occasions. The side aisles should not be less than two feet each. Those between the rows of desks might vary, according to the size of the room, from a foot and a half to two and a half feet.

5. Miscellaneous Suggestions.—The stove should be placed near the door, so that the air may be warmed, to some extent, before its distribution through the room. The entire length of the front of the room should be occupied by a blackboard, or a black wall; and if more than this is needed, it may be placed upon the sides of the room, between the windows. If a platform is used, let it be not more than six or eight inches high. An unbroken level of floor is much better than any platform, because it allows greater freedom of movement and a greater amount of air in the room."

Thus it will be seen that the views of intelligent friends of the schools, in different parts of the country, are the same; and I have quoted thus largely from others and from those of established authority, that I might add force to suggestions that have been made by friends of schools in Vermont whenever this very important subject has arisen.

Early in the history of modern school reform, soon after the appointment of Mr. Mann as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, in casting about to find what was the first and most necessary portion of his labor, he found the apathetic indifference of the people of Massachusetts to the condition of their schoolhouses to be the one great hindrance to all his efforts.

With the concurrence of the Board, he immediately gave his first attention to this matter, and prepared and published a special report upon the schoolhouses in that State. As was usual with him in other cases, so here, having taken the subject in hand, he in a certain sense exhausted it, and produced a report, which may be said of itself to have revolutionized the public sentiment of a whole commonwealth.

This report has never been exceeded that I know, for force, and having remained for a score of years as an inexhaustible magazine and source of supply to those who have followed in the same direction of labor, it is still, as I think, the best condensation of thought and suggestion upon its particular subject which is extant.

With such an appreciation of its value, I have judged best to insert in the appendix the entire report of Mr. Mann, and with an earnest commendation of it, leave the subject for future consideration.

## ATTENDANCE UPON SCHOOL.

It would by no means have been unreasonable to have supposed that the preoccupation of the general mind with anxiety about public affairs, would have very materially affected the attendance upon the schools. And it is unexpectedly encouraging to find, from our statistics, that instead of diminishing, the average attendance upon the schools during the past year was really increased.

The average attendance for the year 1860–1, was reported at 45,442, and for the year 1861–2, it was 47,455, thus exhibiting an increase of 2,013, which is a gain upon the attendance of the previous year of 4 4-10 per cent. This is decidedly hopeful, and yet although it is an improvement upon the attendance of the year before, it still exhibits a general carelessness and want of common economy that is alarming.

The estimated attendance upon private and select schools, for the past year, is 7,121, and if this be added to the average attendance upon the public schools, which was 47,455, we shall have an aggregate average attendance upon all of our schools, public and private, of 54,576. The whole number attending school between the ages of 18 and 20 is reported at 2,642; if this be deducted from the aggregate average attendance upon all the schools, 54,576, we shall have 51,934 as the number of our children who are between the ages of 4 and 18 in attendance upon the schools.

Now the number of children between the ages of 4 and 18 who are reported, is 89,599, from which deducting the number in attendance, 51,934, we have remaining 37,665 children between the ages of 4 and 18 who are regularly absent from all schools.

In other words, while the past year has exhibited an improvement in the attendance of our children upon the schools, it is a sorrowful fact that more than forty-two per cent, of all the school children of our State have been regularly absent from school. Surely the annual presentation of this subject must, ere long arouse public attention.

## STUDIES PURSUED IN OUR SCHOOLS.

To the thoughtful friend of education, that portion of the statistical summary which reveals the comparative time and strength given to the pursuit of the various branches taught in our schools, has a peculiar interest. It is here that we are able to discover the estimation in which our common schools are held by the public generally, as well as the relative rank of the various branches of study in the public consideration.

A very curious and interesting change of relative rank has been gradually occurring in the schools of our State, year by year, and yet so slowly as scarcely to excite a thought, much less any remark.

Within the memory of many among us, the whole attention of the schools was mainly engrossed by reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic; and many of our older citizens distinctly recollect when the introduction of the study of grammar was considered an outrage upon the public schools. Indeed, one member of your Hon. Board well knows, that on

one occasion, a solemn school meeting after mature consideration, directed the study of English grammar to be banished from a common school in Vermont.

But, little by little, a change has been wrought, less time has been given in arithmetic to mere ciphering, and more to demonstration and explanation, but upon the whole, time has been saved here with no diminution of benefit to the scholars; and more time and strength have been devoted to grammar, composition and history.

Thus, during the past year, while the number of students in arithmetic has not been diminished, but rather increased, the number of students in geography, composition and history has perceptibly increased.

In these branches the rates of increase during the past year have been as follows: In arithmetic 1 6-10 per cent., in geography 7 9-10 per cent., in composition 9 2-10 per cent., and in history 18 per cent.

But from these statistical tables and official reports, we find the peculiar conservatism of our State markedly manifesting itself in our schools, by the reluctance with which we give any countenance to the encouragement of classes in some of the most useful as well as attractive branches of study that have received much attention in the schools of nearly every other State.

Geology, physiology and botany have become "common" in the public schools of nearly every one of our neighboring States, but they are hardly known in our schools.

I am not aware that there exists in the public schools of an ordinary grade in our whole State, a single class in geology; and yet, within a few years a very general appreciation of this science has been rapidly growing. And while every intelligent man recognizes an acquaintance with the elements, at least, of geology, as necessary even to what is called a "common education"—no movement is made to introduce it into the schools. Indeed, there seems to be, in some quarters, an actual opposition to any effort in this direction.

With a view of stirring discussion as to the merits of geology as a school study, I requested my friend, Rev. John B. Perry, of Swanton, who has given his hours of recreation, for many years, to self culture in Natural History, to write an essay on the feasibility and desirability of making Geology a branch of school study for at least a portion of our scholars; and I here subjoin the essay which he kindly furnished for the last year's report, but which was excluded by other matter:

## GEOLOGY IN OUR COMMON SCHOOLS.

**Having been requested to furnish something in respect to the desirableness of introducing the study of Geology into our common schools, I herewith cheerfully comply. This I am led to do with less hesitation, because I regard it as a matter of great moment; indeed I am especially emboldened to undertake the task in the hope that the subject may come finally, as I believe it is already slowly coming, to be recognized more nearly according to its real importance. I am at the same time encouraged to make a few suggestions on this topic with more confidence, since this, or some similar, plan evidently lay near the heart of that judicious and justly honored friend of the young, to whose untiring labors the natural as well as civil history of our state owes so much, the lamented Zadoc Thompson; and also because the intimate relation of the subject proposed to the welfare of the rising generation is, and has been, acknowledged by many other staunch friends of education, whose names need no mention in Vermont.**

I may, then, begin with the remark that the introduction of the study of Geology into our common schools is desirable because of the *intrinsic importance of the subject.*

Geology, fairly looked at, covers a *broad and substantial field of knowledge*, with which all should have some acquaintance. The crust of the earth furnished the road travelled alike by the peasant and the potentate in their earthly journey, and surely each should know the nature of the way. Contemplated from one point of view, it embraces in itself, or at least stands in intimate connection with, every branch of Natural History. In thus taking cognisance of that with which each has much to do during his temporal existence, and which especially concerns the large mass of the people, particularly in the rural districts, Geology is very important. It is peculiarly so, since it is calculated to impart an intelligent insight into several branches of knowledge, which are too little understood by us all, though they set forth the nature and relations of objects, with which it is our fortune most frequently to meet in all the walks of life, and with which indeed, every child ought early to become familiar.

The study of this wide subject, accordingly, opens properly with *Mineralogy*, and is suited to lead us daily to a better acquaintance with the constituents of the rocks of the globe, and so with the mineral elements of the soil, on which we tread. Closely connected with this branch of enquiry is the consideration of the modes and effects of mechanical agency, as well as of the processes and results of chemical action—operations which are continually going on, products which are everywhere exhibited, in the domain of matter—attracting the notice of the child no less than that of the philosopher. There is, consequently, much of high importance, in itself considered, in all the phenomena of the material universe, into which every person, so far as practicable, should be initiated, and with which each may easily gain more or less familiarity. The characteristics of some of the more common minerals and metals, with their names, may be readily learned in youth, if attention be only directed to them, and thus the first steps taken, which will gradually lead to a knowledge which is of no little intrinsic worth, and must be of lasting benefit when acquired.

An acquaintance also with *Botany* is implied in most geological investigations, and is likely to be to some extent easily secured by such as engage in them. As these studies are pursued, one may come, almost unconsciously, to be conversant with the great distinctive features of the vegetable world. The more marked characteristics of plants, shrubs and trees, become familiar as household words; often, too, without any great expenditure of time or effort; while a minuter and more intimate acquaintance with them is acquired from day to day, and the mind thus led by imperceptible steps into a knowledge of great value in itself, and which will be of no small moment in after years.

So, too, the study of Geology supposes some familiarity with *Zoology*, and, almost of necessity, introduces the learner into this new and important field. Such animals now living, as chance to fall in the way of one who is becoming interested in fossil remains, receive an attention, which they would not otherwise command, and there thus begins to be gained an understanding of their organization and habits, which prepares the way for a constantly increasing knowledge of the different races which traverse the air and seas, or roam over the dry ground. In this wise, one may get an early start, which as carried on promises to result in an accurate and thorough acquaintance with the living creatures which move on the surface of the earth. This information, to say nothing of the insight, thus gradually acquired, is such, regarded in itself as to deserve to be rated high, and with which few, when once possessed of it, could be willingly induced to part.

By the study of Geology, however, we come to know not solely of one or of another of these kind of objects by itself alone, but more or less of them *all taken together*, as they lived and flourished in former ages, successively died, and came series after series to make up what is the now-existing crust of the earth. In this way there is secured not merely a familiarity with the past, but in addition to it an acquaintance, in itself very important, with things as they are in the present. That which now exists is, by the aid of Geology, seen both in the light which belongs inherently to it, and in the transmitted light of whatever has gone before. The science in question does not merely cover the several fields of enquiry already mentioned; it not only introduces to a knowledge of minerals, plants and animals, as they have appeared at a given point of time, but it also conducts us through the diversified phases of their existence, beginning with species long since extinct, showing us early and low grades of organization typical of higher ones which were to come after, exhibiting the manifold different races in the successive stages of their history, finally bringing us to see the great kingdoms of nature as they are now, and in this wise enabling us to behold them, with clearer insight than would else be possible, under the forms and modes of existence in which

we find them to day. The examination therefore of the fossil remains of such plants and animals, as have lived in the past, in giving us a knowledge of their structure and habits, prepares us for a better understanding of the organization, capabilities and powers, of the various families which now have their abode on earth, and thus of the great scheme of universal nature. This knowledge, then, the first draughts of which, if judiciously dealt out, may be relished by any child, is, as must be evident at a glance, very important in itself, and the early beginning of its acquirement deserving of high consideration, even if no reference be had to any ulterior, or more practical end.

Again, however, the study of Geology is desirable in our common schools, as affording *one of the best means of mental discipline.*

Perhaps no department of knowledge is better suited than this, probably scarcely a branch so well calculated, to lead one to take an *adequate survey of the universe,* and thus wide and far reaching views of truth generally. While Astronomy, which is briefly set forth in its great outlines in our common school geographies, reveals an infinitude space, Geology puts the mind on the stretch to comprehend that almost boundless reach of time supposed to be necessary for the marvelous wonders produced since that beginning from which the creative fiat began to go forth from the Almighty. By such contemplations, on which the young are very ready to enter, and in which they receive an important discipline, the mind is brought into a vast realm, made familiar with its wide-embracing circuit, much more easily than when narrowed by the contracting influence of later habits, and is thus early prepared to look in a comprehensive way at every subject, which may come before it. And the danger of injury from this natural process is far less than from the artificial methods too much in vogue. This is only the carrying forward of a system of observation, upon which every child enters in his earliest years, and which would be usually continued through life were he not soon turned aside by the constraints of an unnatural and therefore false mode of training.

The powers of the learner are, also, pleasantly taxed, as he beholds something new from day to day, and thus unfolded genially, as he advances step by step in *mastering great distinctions,* which are written with a bold hand on all the works of creation. Many facts indicate to him, that there was once simply an expanse of unorganised material, which having its own peculiar affinities, gradually became a more shapely mass of matter, experiencing according to the law of its nature ceaseless changes under the forming power of the Most High, thus serving in one sense at least, to mark and measure the bounds of primeval time. He, also, finds evidence that at length things of life appeared, taking up portions of these inert elements, which by the working of the divine fiats came to be raised above the remainder of this primitive lifeless mass, at once looking upward, and rooting downward, and so in being distinguished from it to serve to cover its nakedness with a robe of verdure. Almost, too, before aware of his advancing insight, he discovers that in the gradual working of creative power, another form of life appeared endowed with powers of sensation and locomotion, drawing material from the tender herb, and yet above it, at once the mate of the defenceless plant, and still its rightful lord; and that far onward and upward in the successive steps of creative wisdom, above all that had gone before, humanity was at last ushered upon the stage, female beauty and manly dignity, more than realising all previous anticipations, formed in the likeness of the Eternal, the crowning work of creation. The pupil, thus starting with the liteless elements around him, soon learns that all visible things may be comprised in the two great provinces of organic and inorganic existence. Proceeding by easy gradations, he comes to be conversant with the differences between, and the prominent points distinctive of, the vast domains of vegetable and of animal life, and to recognize humanity as superior to both, man as intended to use all these forms of existence with wisdom, himself as spiritual to rule his own spirit, and thus to control every element of nature, both without him and in his own being, in ceaseless equity. By an easy process the pupil passes on, entering more minutely into what is involved in these several kingdoms, learning the great divisions belonging respectively to minerals, plants and animals. Proceeding from these he gradually becomes familiar with the characteristics of orders and tribes, of genera and species, the great facts in nature all the while calling out and unfolding correspondent powers of apprehension in his opening mind.

It is likewise true, that in each *individual object,* which attracts the learner's attention, he finds room for endless study. Many a single thing is a world in miniature, and may be examined simply as it is in itself under an almost countless variety of aspects. In such an investigation one may enter into the minutiæ, so far as he

pleases, noting particular after particular, observing each mark which serves to characterize the object, or to distinguish it from every other. This is true of whatever meets the eye in nature. It is the lesson of the little pebble found in the dusty street; aye, of the dust itself, no less than of the mountain mass; of the lonely denizen of the heath equally with the cultivated flower of the garden; of the tiny insect that lurks unobserved in the grass by the wayside, or has its home in some secluded glade, as well as of the fowl that cuts the air, or the noble quadruped that grazes in the winding vale, on the sloping hill-side or the undulating plain.

And this is not all. Under each of these several phases, the young student learns to examine whatever is found in his *neighborhood*. His preparation enables him to begin—where every one ought to begin his enquiries—at home; investigating that which is within his reach, and which he daily beholds. He is in the way to study each thing in the whole world of sense around him in its universal, in its general or specific, and in its particular or individual characteristics; to examine it in its connection with the entire universe, or the great circle of existence to which it pertaines—also in connection with the genus or species to which it belongs,—and likewise as a separate individual. He comes to look, as the legitimate result of his training, at every object he sees, not only as it is in itself as a single, isolated thing, but also in respect to the relations it sustains to the species and varieties of the same kind (genus), as well as to the great families and kingdoms of nature, with which it is associated.

Hence it should be evident that Geology may be made *an invaluable help*, in our public schools, as a means of discipline. Its study tends to unfold the mind according to those great principles in the works of creation, which answer to the laws of human intelligence, in its relations to visible things. It consequently furnishes one of the best aids to the cultivation of a philosophic memory, which can be secured. Facts are remembered in view of the idea or law which is revealed in them. In this, also, the young have a safeguard against the formalism which is likely to be perpetuated by the instruction and habits, too often prevailing in artificial society; since they are hereby brought habitually to contemplate every thing with which they have to do, under the guidance of those necessary principles, everywhere manifested by creative wisdom. They learn to investigate each point in nature, according to the logic of nature, and thus in consistency with the laws of supreme intelligence, as exhibited in the handiwork of Jehovah. Being led in this way to observe things in the light of necessary truth, to scan them in their universal, as well as in their general and particular relations and tendencies, they are made correct reasoners by the mere force of habit. They learn, by this natural process, to draw legitimate conclusions, and to put in practice, whether aware of it or not, the fundamental principles of all sound logic. Thus they may become as well accurate thinkers, as clear-headed and far-sighted observers, acquiring an experience and culture which will be of assistance to them in every outward phase of life, and at the same time prepare them for a higher and spiritual discipline, leading them to see and to feel that, in the domain of literature and art, of morals and religion, every subject should be studied, according to its peculiar principles, in the light of the eternal laws pertaining to it, and by the aid of its own intrinsic excellence.

Once more, Geology is desirable as a study in our common schools in view of the *importance of its economical applications*.

Scarcely any other department of scientific enquiry furnishes, or is able to furnish, so much *information of a practical kind*. This may be true in part, from the fact that Geology uses most other branches as her handmaids; still, without her help, they would be to a much larger extent unavailing. While, then, this science aims to inform us directly of the several strata of earth's surface, and of their predominant characteristics, it at the same time leads indirectly to a knowledge, of whatever pertains to their physical structure and condition; consequently of the great variety of features peculiar to a given district, with the uses and benefits to which every element may be turned. In making us familiar with the different formations of a neighborhood, it brings to light the peculiarities of its rocky masses, the kinds and qualities of the imbedded minerals and metals, noting the facilities for the opening of quarries, or the sinking of mines, with the probable advantages and drawbacks, attending such undertakings, in the locality in question. It also makes known the nature of the various soils—indicating for what they are severally suited, for what unfit—pointing out their positive excellencies, and the elements which need to be added, in order to increase their productivity. A share of attention is, likewise, bestowed on the lakes, rivers and waterfalls; on the best methods of improving their navigation; on the economical purposes to which they may be applied; on the changes capable of being advantageously made, with a reference to such as the nature of the rocks, or of the soil will not

safely allow; while some account is also given of the native fishes, in which they abound, or of such new varieties as might be introduced and propagated with profit. So, too, notice is taken of the original forests; of the best employment that can be made of them; of the new trees and plants which it might be well to acclimate; of the domestic animals, as well as of those which swarm in the wilds; of such creatures as should receive more care; and especially of breeds, the introduction of which promises to be of avail.

The study of Geology and its allied branches, giving us such an acquaintance with the physical condition and resources of a country, will of course lead to a more intelligent and advantageous *employment of the materials which are already in use.* That which might annually bring in thousands and thousands of dollars, if properly managed, is now either literally wasted, or turned to little good purpose. No small loss arises from the sowing of soils, which may be well fitted for the growth of a given species of grain, with some other to which they are not adapted; from the neglect to supply grounds, which have many excellent elements, with other ingredients, which have been either exhausted by a long succession of the same kind of crops, or of which they are destitute in their original condition. Many materials, likewise, which are suited to advance our agricultural interests, are, usually from ignorance of their nature, either allowed to lie at rest, losing their main worth by exposure, or, at best, only partially improved. As knowledge of these things increases and becomes disseminated, all refuse vegetable and animal matter will be turned to profitable use; while muck and lime, both as marl and in its various other forms, (a great abundance of all which is found in different localities,) will receive proper attention, and be applied with more insight into their essential character, and so with far greater profit. Gaining a better acquaintance with the nature of things, we shall be able to employ them more nearly aright and with greater profit. As this comes to pass, every little stream will turn its score of wheels; our timber will be worked up at home, both enhancing its value and giving labor to thousands; our ores smelted and converted into utensils for ornament and use before being sent to market; while our rawhides will be tanned with bark from our own hills and manufactured into shoes; all these and countless other things being done with the increasing degree of prudence and foresight, which accompany investigation, and seek to turn everything to the best account.

Such knowledge must also tend to the intelligent discovery and discreet *employment of new resources.* Usually those discoveries are of most avail, which are made in the light of scientific research. It is only as the individual has an insight into the nature of things, no matter how acquired, that he can find out what needs to be known and put it to a good use. Now there is much in the bowels of the earth, much all about us, much that is easily accessible, and of which we know only the simplest uses; of which, indeed, the many are as yet hardly familiar with the alphabet. Scarcely any region exceeds our own, in the abundance and richness of those internal resources, which tend to the high advancement of a community in wealth and prosperity. While we have marbles of many varieties and in any quantity, other building stones and timber in considerable amount, as well as ores of the useful and precious metals to a limited extent, we are especially favored in having those materials which are needed in the improvement of the soil, which are thus calculated to make Vermonters an agricultural people, their State a garden of honest industry and frugality, their land a fruitful heritage from the Lord. These materials have been thus far only slightly resorted to, their quality and worth being generally little appreciated as yet, while there is doubtless, in many localities, an inexhaustible supply still entirely unknown. The minds of our youth being early turned to the character and resources of their native hills, investigations of this kind will be engaged in, and carried on through life, new discoveries constantly made, as well as better and more effective modes of application continually rendered available. At the same time, a slight familiarity with our different geological formations will serve as a safeguard against visionary schemes, preventing unnecessary outlays in making excavations for coal, where none is to be found; or, in digging for gold and silver in localities, for which the application of the plow is much better. Thus our young men, our farmers and mechanics, becoming intelligent in their respective callings, will be preserved from extravagant whims, while they will bring out and apply the available resources of the land with a constantly increasing discernment. Indeed, as investigation advances, they will make new discoveries, become better acquainted with the capabilities of their native State, and so be led to settle down at home, and turn every means within their reach to a better, more thrifty and economical use.

buildings may be thrown into the back-ground, not only in reference to the house, but to the street also.

3. Outside Structure.—The details of this will be more particularly noticed in the description of the plans. In most cases, it will be observed, a double porch, with separate entrances for boys and girls, has been provided, and this arrangement is regarded as highly important. It prevents the possibility of improper communication between the two sexes, while passing in and out of the school-room. The room in the lobby is also used as a clothes-room, at a manifest saving of expense.

4. Wood-House.—In most of the plans proposed, the wood-house is placed directly in the rear, so that a portion of it may serve for a back hall. This arrangement contributes to harmony of external appearance, and prevents the out-door air from blowing directly into the school-room. Thus serving a double purpose, the wood-house is almost indispensable. A basement, however, might be prepared for the storage of fuel.

5. Privies.—With the yard divided by a high, substantial board fence, running from the back side of the wood-house to the rear fence, two privies are indispensable. In Designs I. and II., an arrangement is given for a double privy, directly in the rear of the wood-house, but this arrangement is objectionable, unless plenty of water can be obtained to flow through the vault into a sewer. Even if a double privy is decided upon, it would be better to place it at a greater distance from the house, so as to preclude the possibility of its becoming offensive. But any double privy is objectionable; although so arranged as to shut out the intrusive gaze, it cannot be made entirely impervious to sound; and the vicious may take advantage of its construction to outrage the feelings of the pure minded, without the fear of detection. A better way would be to separate the privies entirely, and place them near the middle of the remote ends of their respective yards. The entrances should be upon the rear side, or else a screen should be erected to shield them from observation. The expense of two vaults and two buildings would of course be somewhat greater than that of a single one; but the obvious good resulting from the plan, would more than compensate for the difference.

6. Walks.—That is a very false economy which refuses or neglects to furnish the necessary walks in and about the school premises. The country schoolhouse is proverbial for filth. Generally but a step removed from the carriage-path in the street, and without walks of any description anywhere in the vicinity, except a single path of the native soil, the wonder is that it is not more, rather than less, offensive. During some seasons of the year the children must wade through mud and water to reach the school, and not one foot of dry space is provided where they can cleanse themselves until they enter the house itself. The consequence is, that dirt is everywhere, and tidiness impossible. To remedy this as much as possible, arrangements should be made to preclude the necessity of getting into the mud, within the school-yard, and to enable the scholars to remove it from their feet, when coming in from the road. A plank or gravel walk should be laid from the front gate to the front door. The steps at the door should be large and commodious. These steps, and perhaps also a portion of the walk, should be provided with scrapers. A

strip of band-iron, nailed upon the edge of a plank twelve feet long, so that the edge of the iron may rise half an inch above the surface of the plank, will make an excellent and economical scraper, and accommodate a dozen or more pupils at the same time. Plank walks should also extend from the back entrances to the privies, and perhaps around the sides of the schoolhouse.

7. Fence,—The school lot can never be kept in order unless it is enclosed by a good and substantial fence; this fence should be built of good materials, and put up in a solid manner. A picket, or a post-and-rail fence, would answer every purpose. The gates should be built strong and heavy, and so arranged as to shut of themselves. It might be well to set posts within the gates, in such a manner that cattle could not get in, even if the gates should be left open. The fence that divides the yards should be of matched stuff, and from eight to ten feet high, faced on the boys' side. The wood-house door should open into the boys' yard. In a succeeding chapter the subject of out-houses will be treated more at large.

---

## Chapter III.

### *Internal Arrangements.*

The internal structure of the schoolhouse may be considered under the heads of Size, Shape of School-Room, Side-Rooms, Seats and Desks, and Miscellaneous Suggestions.

1. Size of School-Room.—A school-room should always be sufficiently large to furnish each pupil with space enough for a desk and chair, and for free and unobstructed movement. There should be room for the personal accommodation of the teacher, and for purposes of recitation. The height of the smallest school-room should never be less than twelve feet, and this should be increased to sixteen feet in the larger houses. Comfort and convenience, in sitting and moving about, depend upon the area of the room, the quantity of air upon the area and height combined. In the plans furnished in this work, eighteen feet area, and nearly two hundred and fifty cubic feet of air, have been appropriated to each pupil.

2. Shape of the Room.—Of all rectangular forms, a square room will give the greatest amount of space, in proportion to the extent of outside walls. Many teachers, however, prefer a room one-fourth or one-fifth longer than its width; and probably no better form can be devised than this, or one between this and square. When the parallelogram is used, it will be found more convenient to leave the space for the teacher's desk, and recitation benches, upon the end, instead of the side. The octagonal form is thought by some to be peculiarly adapted to school purposes, and specimens have been presented in this work.

3. Side-Rooms.—In every schoolhouse there should be a separate room for depositing hats, bonnets, etc., and in larger houses, another for library and apparatus. For the sake of economy and convenience, in the

plans here given, the porch has been so arranged as to serve the double purpose of entry-way and clothes-room. In the smaller houses, a single porch will be sufficient; but in the larger ones, a double porch should be provided, so that there may be ample room for the uses to which it is to be put, and a complete separation of the sexes. These rooms should be amply provided with hooks and shelves. In the smaller houses, a case for books and apparatus, answering every purpose, can be constructed upon one side of the school-room, in the place designated in the plans. In houses designated to accommodate more pupils than any one teacher can instruct, an additional room for recitation should be provided, a separate room for the teacher to occupy during recesses and intermissions, and to retire to when wearied and perplexed with the cares and duties of the day, is also very desirable; but we fear this reasonable luxury will not be realized until public sentiment, with respect to the educational profession, is made liberal far beyond its present level. Every wood-house should be so arranged as to form a back entry-way as well as a store-house.

4. Seats and Desks.—Many methods for seating schoolhouses have been proposed, and many experiments have been made, to economise room and to secure the greatest convenience. It now seems to be generally conceded that the best arrangement is that of single or double desks, placed in parallel rows, with aisles between of sufficient width to permit passage. By this plan the pupils all face one way, and the teacher can see them all at a glance. When the seats are arranged upon the sides of the room, with the open space in the center, this is impossible, and discipline is almost out of the question. Double desks are more economical than single ones, as they cost less, and take up less space in the room.

*The desks should always be so placed that the pupils may face the entrance.* The reasons for this arrangement are obvious. The entrance and exit of pupils or visitors will be sure to attract attention, and it is impossible to prevent this by any proper system of discipline. If the backs of the pupils are towards the entrance, they will turn about whenever the door opens or closes, presenting an unseemly appearance, as well as seriously interfering with the business of study and recitation. This habit of turning, once formed, will be practiced upon occasions, to the great annoyance of the teacher and the subversion of discipline. Again, when strangers or others visit the school, or call at the school-room for any purpose, the teacher is obliged to receive them at the rear end of the room, instead of in front, which is awkward and inconvenient. It is as though the entrance to the parlor of a private house should be made through the kitchen. With the pupils facing the entrance, when the door opens, a glance is sufficient, without change of posture or suspension of business, to satisfy the most vagrant curiosity. The teacher can receive his visitors at once, and in the proper place, without parade and without difficulty. Finally, the door or doors leading to the wood-house or back yard should be in the rear of the room, and this can only be when the front of the room is next the front entrance. The author can speak feelingly upon this subject, having had experience in both methods, and retaining a vivid remembrance of the constant annoyance to which he was

subjected in the rooms where the pupils were seated with their backs towards the entrance.

The space in front of the desks should be sufficiently large for purposes of recitation; this in school-rooms of ordinary size, would be about ten feet; in small rooms perhaps a little less. A space of two or three feet in width should be left in the rear of the room for classes upon special occasions. The side aisles should not be less than two feet each. Those between the rows of desks might vary, according to the size of the room, from a foot and a half to two and a half feet.

5. Miscellaneous Suggestions.—The stove should be placed near the door, so that the air may be warmed, to some extent, before its distribution through the room. The entire length of the front of the room should be occupied by a blackboard, or a black wall; and if more than this is needed, it may be placed upon the sides of the room, between the windows. If a platform is used, let it be not more than six or eight inches high. An unbroken level of floor is much better than any platform, because it allows greater freedom of movement and a greater amount of air in the room."

Thus it will be seen that the views of intelligent friends of the schools, in different parts of the country, are the same; and I have quoted thus largely from others and from those of established authority, that I might add force to suggestions that have been made by friends of schools in Vermont whenever this very important subject has arisen.

Early in the history of modern school reform, soon after the appointment of Mr. Mann as Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, in casting about to find what was the first and most necessary portion of his labor, he found the apathetic indifference of the people of Massachusetts to the condition of their schoolhouses to be the one great hindrance to all his efforts.

With the concurrence of the Board, he immediately gave his first attention to this matter, and prepared and published a special report upon the schoolhouses in that State. As was usual with him in other cases, so here, having taken the subject in hand, he in a certain sense exhausted it, and produced a report, which may be said of itself to have revolutionized the public sentiment of a whole commonwealth.

This report has never been exceeded that I know, for force, and having remained for a score of years as an inexhaustible magazine and source of supply to those who have followed in the same direction of labor, it is still, as I think, the best condensation of thought and suggestion upon its particular subject which is extant.

With such an appreciation of its value, I have judged best to insert in the appendix the entire report of Mr. Mann, and with an earnest commendation of it, leave the subject for future consideration.

## ATTENDANCE UPON SCHOOL.

It would by no means have been unreasonable to have supposed that the preoccupation of the general mind with anxiety about public affairs, would have very materially affected the attendance upon the schools. And it is unexpectedly encouraging to find, from our statistics, that instead of diminishing, the average attendance upon the schools during the past year was really increased.

The average attendance for the year 1860–1, was reported at 45,442, and for the year 1861–2, it was 47,455, thus exhibiting an increase of 2,013, which is a gain upon the attendance of the previous year of 4 4-10 per cent. This is decidedly hopeful, and yet although it is an improvement upon the attendance of the year before, it still exhibits a general carelessness and want of common economy that is alarming.

The estimated attendance upon private and select schools, for the past year, is 7,121, and if this be added to the average attendance upon the public schools, which was 47,455, we shall have an aggregate average attendance upon all of our schools, public and private, of 54,576. The whole number attending school between the ages of 18 and 20 is reported at 2,642; if this be deducted from the aggregate average attendance upon all the schools, 54,576, we shall have 51,934 as the number of our children who are between the ages of 4 and 18 in attendance upon the schools.

Now the number of children between the ages of 4 and 18 who are reported, is 89,599, from which deducting the number in attendance, 51,934, we have remaining 37,665 children between the ages of 4 and 18 who are regularly absent from all schools.

In other words, while the past year has exhibited an improvement in the attendance of our children upon the schools, it is a sorrowful fact that more than forty-two per cent, of all the school children of our State have been regularly absent from school. Surely the annual presentation of this subject must, ere long arouse public attention.

## STUDIES PURSUED IN OUR SCHOOLS.

To the thoughtful friend of education, that portion of the statistical summary which reveals the comparative time and strength given to the pursuit of the various branches taught in our schools, has a peculiar interest. It is here that we are able to discover the estimation in which our common schools are held by the public generally, as well as the relative rank of the various branches of study in the public consideration.

A very curious and interesting change of relative rank has been gradually occurring in the schools of our State, year by year, and yet so slowly as scarcely to excite a thought, much less any remark.

Within the memory of many among us, the whole attention of the schools was mainly engrossed by reading, spelling, writing and arithmetic; and many of our older citizens distinctly recollect when the introduction of the study of grammar was considered an outrage upon the public schools. Indeed, one member of your Hon. Board well knows, that on

one occasion, a solemn school meeting after mature consideration, directed the study of English grammar to be banished from a common school in Vermont.

But, little by little, a change has been wrought, less time has been given in arithmetic to mere ciphering, and more to demonstration and explanation, but upon the whole, time has been saved here with no diminution of benefit to the scholars; and more time and strength have been devoted to grammar, composition and history.

Thus, during the past year, while the number of students in arithmetic has not been diminished, but rather increased, the number of students in geography, composition and history has perceptibly increased.

In these branches the rates of increase during the past year have been as follows: In arithmetic 1 6-10 per cent., in geography 7 9-10 per cent., in composition 9 2-10 per cent., and in history 18 per cent.

But from these statistical tables and official reports, we find the peculiar conservatism of our State markedly manifesting itself in our schools, by the reluctance with which we give any countenance to the encouragement of classes in some of the most useful as well as attractive branches of study that have received much attention in the schools of nearly every other State.

Geology, physiology and botany have become "common" in the public schools of nearly every one of our neighboring States, but they are hardly known in our schools.

I am not aware that there exists in the public schools of an ordinary grade in our whole State, a single class in geology; and yet, within a few years a very general appreciation of this science has been rapidly growing. And while every intelligent man recognizes an acquaintance with the elements, at least, of geology, as necessary even to what is called a "common education"—no movement is made to introduce it into the schools. Indeed, there seems to be, in some quarters, an actual opposition to any effort in this direction.

With a view of stirring discussion as to the merits of geology as a school study, I requested my friend, Rev. John B. Perry, of Swanton, who has given his hours of recreation, for many years, to self culture in Natural History, to write an essay on the feasibility and desirability of making Geology a branch of school study for at least a portion of our scholars; and I here subjoin the essay which he kindly furnished for the last year's report, but which was excluded by other matter:

## GEOLOGY IN OUR COMMON SCHOOLS.

**Having been requested to furnish something in respect to the desirableness of introducing the study of Geology into our common schools, I herewith cheerfully comply. This I am led to do with less hesitation, because I regard it as a matter of great moment; indeed I am especially emboldened to undertake the task in the hope that the subject may come finally, as I believe it is already slowly coming, to be recognized more nearly according to its real importance. I am at the same time encouraged to make a few suggestions on this topic with more confidence, since this, or some similar, plan evidently lay near the heart of that judicious and justly honored friend of the young, to whose untiring labors the natural as well as civil history of our state owes so much, the lamented Zadoc Thompson; and also because the intimate relation of the subject proposed to the welfare of the rising generation is, and has been, acknowledged by many other staunch friends of education, whose names need no mention in Vermont.**

I may, then, begin with the remark that the introduction of the study of Geology into our common schools is desirable because of the *intrinsic importance of the subject.*

Geology, fairly looked at, covers a *broad and substantial field of knowledge*, with which all should have some acquaintance. The crust of the earth furnished the road travelled alike by the peasant and the potentate in their earthly journey, and surely each should know the nature of the way. Contemplated from one point of view, it embraces in itself, or at least stands in intimate connection with, every branch of Natural History. In thus taking cognisance of that with which each has much to do during his temporal existence, and which especially concerns the large mass of the people, particularly in the rural districts, Geology is very important. It is peculiarly so, since it is calculated to impart an intelligent insight into several branches of knowledge, which are too little understood by us all, though they set forth the nature and relations of objects, with which it is our fortune most frequently to meet in all the walks of life, and with which indeed, every child ought early to become familiar.

The study of this wide subject, accordingly, opens properly with *Mineralogy*, and is suited to lead us daily to a better acquaintance with the constituents of the rocks of the globe, and so with the mineral elements of the soil, on which we tread. Closely connected with this branch of enquiry is the consideration of the modes and effects of mechanical agency, as well as of the processes and results of chemical action—operations which are continually going on, products which are everywhere exhibited, in the domain of matter—attracting the notice of the child no less than that of the philosopher. There is, consequently, much of high importance, in itself considered, in all the phenomena of the material universe, into which every person, so far as practicable, should be initiated, and with which each may easily gain more or less familiarity. The characteristics of some of the more common minerals and metals, with their names, may be readily learned in youth, if attention be only directed to them, and thus the first steps taken, which will gradually lead to a knowledge which is of no little intrinsic worth, and must be of lasting benefit when acquired.

An acquaintance also with *Botany* is implied in most geological investigations, and is likely to be to some extent easily secured by such as engage in them. As these studies are pursued, one may come, almost unconsciously, to be conversant with the great distinctive features of the vegetable world. The more marked characteristics of plants, shrubs and trees, become familiar as household words; often, too, without any great expenditure of time or effort; while a minuter and more intimate acquaintance with them is acquired from day to day, and the mind thus led by imperceptible steps into a knowledge of great value in itself, and which will be of no small moment in after years.

So, too, the study of Geology supposes some familiarity with *Zoology*, and, almost of necessity, introduces the learner into this new and important field. Such animals now living, as chance to fall in the way of one who is becoming interested in fossil remains, receive an attention, which they would not otherwise command, and there thus begins to be gained an understanding of their organization and habits, which prepares the way for a constantly increasing knowledge of the different races which traverse the air and seas, or roam over the dry ground. In this wise, one may get an early start, which as carried on promises to result in an accurate and thorough acquaintance with the living creatures which move on the surface of the earth. This information, to say nothing of the insight, thus gradually acquired, is such, regarded in itself as to deserve to be rated high, and with which few, when once possessed of it, could be willingly induced to part.

By the study of Geology, however, we come to know not solely of one or of another of these kind of objects by itself alone, but more or less of them *all taken together*, as they lived and flourished in former ages, successively died, and came series after series to make up what is the now-existing crust of the earth. In this way there is secured not merely a familiarity with the past, but in addition to it an acquaintance, in itself very important, with things as they are in the present. That which now exists is, by the aid of Geology, seen both in the light which belongs inherently to it, and in the transmitted light of whatever has gone before. The science in question does not merely cover the several fields of enquiry already mentioned; it not only introduces to a knowledge of minerals, plants and animals, as they have appeared at a given point of time, but it also conducts us through the diversified phases of their existence, beginning with species long since extinct, showing us early and low grades of organization typical of higher ones which were to come after, exhibiting the manifold different races in the successive stages of their history, finally bringing us to see the great kingdoms of nature as they are now, and in this wise enabling us to behold them, with clearer insight than would else be possible, under the forms and modes of existence in which

we find them to day. The examination therefore of the fossil remains of such plants and animals, as have lived in the past, in giving us a knowledge of their structure and habits, prepares us for a better understanding of the organization, capabilities and powers, of the various families which now have their abode on earth, and thus of the great scheme of universal nature. This knowledge, then, the first draughts of which, if judiciously dealt out, may be relished by any child, is, as must be evident at a glance, very important in itself, and the early beginning of its acquirement deserving of high consideration, even if no reference be had to any ulterior, or more practical end.

Again, however, the study of Geology is desirable in our common schools, as affording *one of the best means of mental discipline.*

Perhaps no department of knowledge is better suited than this, probably scarcely a branch so well calculated, to lead one to take an *adequate survey of the universe,* and thus wide and far reaching views of truth generally. While Astronomy, which is briefly set forth in its great outlines in our common school geographies, reveals an infinitude space, Geology puts the mind on the stretch to comprehend that almost boundless reach of time supposed to be necessary for the marvelous wonders produced since that beginning from which the creative fiat began to go forth from the Almighty. By such contemplations, on which the young are very ready to enter, and in which they receive an important discipline, the mind is brought into a vast realm, made familiar with its wide-embracing circuit, much more easily than when narrowed by the contracting influence of later habits, and is thus early prepared to look in a comprehensive way at every subject, which may come before it. And the danger of injury from this natural process is far less than from the artificial methods too much in vogue. This is only the carrying forward of a system of observation, upon which every child enters in his earliest years, and which would be usually continued through life were he not soon turned aside by the constraints of an unnatural and therefore false mode of training.

The powers of the learner are, also, pleasantly taxed, as he beholds something new from day to day, and thus unfolded genially, as he advances step by step in *mastering great distinctions,* which are written with a bold hand on all the works of creation. Many facts indicate to him, that there was once simply an expanse of unorganised material, which having its own peculiar affinities, gradually became a more shapely mass of matter, experiencing according to the law of its nature ceaseless changes under the forming power of the Most High, thus serving in one sense at least, to mark and measure the bounds of primeval time. He, also, finds evidence that at length things of life appeared, taking up portions of these inert elements, which by the working of the divine fiats came to be raised above the remainder of this primitive lifeless mass, at once looking upward, and rooting downward, and so in being distinguished from it to serve to cover its nakedness with a robe of verdure. Almost, too, before aware of his advancing insight, he discovers that in the gradual working of creative power, another form of life appeared endowed with powers of sensation and locomotion, drawing material from the tender herb, and yet above it, at once the mate of the defenceless plant, and still its rightful lord; and that far onward and upward in the successive steps of creative wisdom, above all that had gone before, humanity was at last ushered upon the stage, female beauty and manly dignity, more than realising all previous anticipations, formed in the likeness of the Eternal, the crowning work of creation. The pupil, thus starting with the liteless elements around him, soon learns that all visible things may be comprised in the two great provinces of organic and inorganic existence. Proceeding by easy gradations, he comes to be conversant with the differences between, and the prominent points distinctive of, the vast domains of vegetable and of animal life, and to recognize humanity as superior to both, man as intended to use all these forms of existence with wisdom, himself as spiritual to rule his own spirit, and thus to control every element of nature, both without him and in his own being, in ceaseless equity. By an easy process the pupil passes on, entering more minutely into what is involved in these several kingdoms, learning the great divisions belonging respectively to minerals, plants and animals. Proceeding from these he gradually becomes familiar with the characteristics of orders and tribes, of genera and species, the great facts in nature all the while calling out and unfolding correspondent powers of apprehension in his opening mind.

It is likewise true, that in each *individual object,* which attracts the learner's attention, he finds room for endless study. Many a single thing is a world in miniature, and may be examined simply as it is in itself under an almost countless variety of aspects. In such an investigation one may enter into the minutiæ, so far as he

pleases, noting particular after particular, observing each mark which serves to characterize the object, or to distinguish it from every other. This is true of whatever meets the eye in nature. It is the lesson of the little pebble found in the dusty street; aye, of the dust itself, no less than of the mountain mass; of the lonely denizen of the heath equally with the cultivated flower of the garden; of the tiny insect that lurks unobserved in the grass by the wayside, or has its home in some secluded glade, as well as of the fowl that cuts the air, or the noble quadruped that grazes in the winding vale, on the sloping hill-side or the undulating plain.

And this is not all. Under each of these several phases, the young student learns to examine whatever is found in his *neighborhood*. His preparation enables him to begin—where every one ought to begin his enquiries—at home; investigating that which is within his reach, and which he daily beholds. He is in the way to study each thing in the whole world of sense around him in its universal, in its general or specific, and in its particular or individual characteristics; to examine it in its connection with the entire universe, or the great circle of existence to which it pertaines—also in connection with the genus or species to which it belongs,—and likewise as a separate individual. He comes to look, as the legitimate result of his training, at every object he sees, not only as it is in itself as a single, isolated thing, but also in respect to the relations it sustains to the species and varieties of the same kind (genus), as well as to the great families and kingdoms of nature, with which it is associated.

Hence it should be evident that Geology may be made *an invaluable help*, in our public schools, as a means of discipline. Its study tends to unfold the mind according to those great principles in the works of creation, which answer to the laws of human intelligence, in its relations to visible things. It consequently furnishes one of the best aids to the cultivation of a philosophic memory, which can be secured. Facts are remembered in view of the idea or law which is revealed in them. In this, also, the young have a safeguard against the formalism which is likely to be perpetuated by the instruction and habits, too often prevailing in artificial society; since they are hereby brought habitually to contemplate every thing with which they have to do, under the guidance of those necessary principles, everywhere manifested by creative wisdom. They learn to investigate each point in nature, according to the logic of nature, and thus in consistency with the laws of supreme intelligence, as exhibited in the handiwork of Jehovah. Being led in this way to observe things in the light of necessary truth, to scan them in their universal, as well as in their general and particular relations and tendencies, they are made correct reasoners by the mere force of habit. They learn, by this natural process, to draw legitimate conclusions, and to put in practice, whether aware of it or not, the fundamental principles of all sound logic. Thus they may become as well accurate thinkers, as clear-headed and far-sighted observers, acquiring an experience and culture which will be of assistance to them in every outward phase of life, and at the same time prepare them for a higher and spiritual discipline, leading them to see and to feel that, in the domain of literature and art, of morals and religion, every subject should be studied, according to its peculiar principles, in the light of the eternal laws pertaining to it, and by the aid of its own intrinsic excellence.

Once more, Geology is desirable as a study in our common schools in view of the *importance of its economical applications*.

Scarcely any other department of scientific enquiry furnishes, or is able to furnish, so much *information of a practical kind*. This may be true in part, from the fact that Geology uses most other branches as her handmaids; still, without her help, they would be to a much larger extent unavailing. While, then, this science aims to inform us directly of the several strata of earth's surface, and of their predominant characteristics, it at the same time leads indirectly to a knowledge, of whatever pertains to their physical structure and condition; consequently of the great variety of features peculiar to a given district, with the uses and benefits to which every element may be turned. In making us familiar with the different formations of a neighborhood, it brings to light the peculiarities of its rocky masses, the kinds and qualities of the imbedded minerals and metals, noting the facilities for the opening of quarries, or the sinking of mines, with the probable advantages and drawbacks, attending such undertakings, in the locality in question. It also makes known the nature of the various soils—indicating for what they are severally suited, for what unfit—pointing out their positive excellencies, and the elements which need to be added, in order to increase their productivity. A share of attention is, likewise, bestowed on the lakes, rivers and waterfalls; on the best methods of improving their navigation; on the economical purposes to which they may be applied; on the changes capable of being advantageously made, with a reference to such as the nature of the rocks, or of the soil will not

safely allow; while some account is also given of the native fishes, in which they abound, or of such new varieties as might be introduced and propagated with profit. So, too, notice is taken of the original forests; of the best employment that can be made of them; of the new trees and plants which it might be well to acclimate; of the domestic animals, as well as of those which swarm in the wilds; of such creatures as should receive more care; and especially of breeds, the introduction of which promises to be of avail.

The study of Geology and its allied branches, giving us such an acquaintance with the physical condition and resources of a country, will of course lead to a more intelligent and advantageous *employment of the materials which are already in use.* That which might annually bring in thousands and thousands of dollars, if properly managed, is now either literally wasted, or turned to little good purpose. No small loss arises from the sowing of soils, which may be well fitted for the growth of a given species of grain, with some other to which they are not adapted; from the neglect to supply grounds, which have many excellent elements, with other ingredients, which have been either exhausted by a long succession of the same kind of crops, or of which they are destitute in their original condition. Many materials, likewise, which are suited to advance our agricultural interests, are, usually from ignorance of their nature, either allowed to lie at rest, losing their main worth by exposure, or, at best, only partially improved. As knowledge of these things increases and becomes disseminated, all refuse vegetable and animal matter will be turned to profitable use; while muck and lime, both as marl and in its various other forms, (a great abundance of all which is found in different localities,) will receive proper attention, and be applied with more insight into their essential character, and so with far greater profit. Gaining a better acquaintance with the nature of things, we shall be able to employ them more nearly aright and with greater profit. As this comes to pass, every little stream will turn its score of wheels; our timber will be worked up at home, both enhancing its value and giving labor to thousands; our ores smelted and converted into utensils for ornament and use before being sent to market; while our rawhides will be tanned with bark from our own hills and manufactured into shoes; all these and countless other things being done with the increasing degree of prudence and foresight, which accompany investigation, and seek to turn everything to the best account.

Such knowledge must also tend to the intelligent discovery and discreet *employment of new resources.* Usually those discoveries are of most avail, which are made in the light of scientific research. It is only as the individual has an insight into the nature of things, no matter how acquired, that he can find out what needs to be known and put it to a good use. Now there is much in the bowels of the earth, much all about us, much that is easily accessible, and of which we know only the simplest uses; of which, indeed, the many are as yet hardly familiar with the alphabet. Scarcely any region exceeds our own, in the abundance and richness of those internal resources, which tend to the high advancement of a community in wealth and prosperity. While we have marbles of many varieties and in any quantity, other building stones and timber in considerable amount, as well as ores of the useful and precious metals to a limited extent, we are especially favored in having those materials which are needed in the improvement of the soil, which are thus calculated to make Vermonters an agricultural people, their State a garden of honest industry and frugality, their land a fruitful heritage from the Lord. These materials have been thus far only slightly resorted to, their quality and worth being generally little appreciated as yet, while there is doubtless, in many localities, an inexhaustible supply still entirely unknown. The minds of our youth being early turned to the character and resources of their native hills, investigations of this kind will be engaged in, and carried on through life, new discoveries constantly made, as well as better and more effective modes of application continually rendered available. At the same time, a slight familiarity with our different geological formations will serve as a safeguard against visionary schemes, preventing unnecessary outlays in making excavations for coal, where none is to be found; or, in digging for gold and silver in localities, for which the application of the plow is much better. Thus our young men, our farmers and mechanics, becoming intelligent in their respective callings, will be preserved from extravagant whims, while they will bring out and apply the available resources of the land with a constantly increasing discernment. Indeed, as investigation advances, they will make new discoveries, become better acquainted with the capabilities of their native State, and so be led to settle down at home, and turn every means within their reach to a better, more thrifty and economical use.

This, however, suggests a result of no small moment, which is likely to follow studies of this kind. Reference is made to the *feelings* and *habits*, which may be in this wise awakened or established in the young, and which are suited to exert upon them a controling influence for good in their future career. A thorough early acquaintance with the structure of the rocks, with the character and productions of the soil, with which we have been familiar from childhood, attaches us to our native land, leads to the excitation and subserves the strengthening of an abiding love for home. Knowing our birth-place well, we shall be less ready to leave it. Then, too, a habit of thoughtfulness and patient industry is likely to be called out by this same means. With some such knowledge of things around us as these studies give, the toils of the farm, or of the shop are entered upon and endured with far more heartiness than would otherwise be the case. Our young men being well schooled in that which pertains to their future vocation, will be almost sure to engage in it with alacrity and zeal; to prosecute its labors with prudence and discretion; and to work, with greater industry and energy, for the realization of the high and noble ends, involved in their calling. The proper training of the young, the calling out of right sentiments, the establishment of good habits—in a word, the forming of reliable and intelligent citizens, who shall each be at home in his craft, is a prominent aim of public instruction, one of the most important points, and deserving ever to be kept in mind, in the maintenance of our early nurseries of learning.

Geology, then, in view of the economical applications and the influence its investigations are suited to exert, has *no small claim* to an introduction into our common schools. Vermont has many internal resources, in her ores and building materials, in her lime rocks and granite, in her serpentines and soapstones, and especially in the products of her farms; but above all, in her permanent adaptation to agriculture and grazing purposes, because of the abundance of her native resources for the constant improvement of the soil. This being so, the rising generation need to be educated, with a view to the great business of their lives. The nurture of the young should be of a kind to fit them for their future labors, to make them diligent and faithful, to waken in them such a sense of their high responsibility, as will lead to the intelligent performance of their great work. This ought to be the case especially with those who intend to be farmers. If, indeed, some 9-10ths of the capital of the State be invested in agricultural pursuits—if a large proportion of our citizens have to do directly with the soil, with its vegetable products, and with those creatures of life which feed on the growth of the land—surely the common school, in which they receive all their formal education, ought to furnish instruction in the elements of those branches, from which they are likely to derive most profit, both in childhood, and through all the later periods of their early existence.

Still, again, the study of Geology is desirable in our common schools, because of its *benefit to individuals and to the State.*

Geological investigations, in enabling men to employ material resources *to the best advantage*, are a great help to each person, and so add to the prosperity of the people at large. In Vermont they may be of most especial assistance to the farmer, since in his State agriculture is the predominant interest. Indicating what plants and animals are best adapted to a given locality, they not only guard him against a useless loss, but also confer upon him a lasting favor. A great gain is secured to the individual and to the community, when all learn that it a wretched policy to raise a quarter of a crop of poor wheat, where there might be a luxuriant growth of corn; or, to half-starve one breed of cattle or sheep in a district, in which another would thrive. Learning that 100 pounds of potatoe stalks contain about 13 pounds of lime, which must be drawn from the ground, one becomes a debtor to science, when he is thereby induced either to plant his potatoes on a calcareous soil, or else to act the part of wisdom by supplying the deficiency in this point, if it can be economically done. He may learn in this way to avoid many fruitless efforts against nature—to make all agricultural labors rather an aid than a hindrance to her working—and thus find himself prospered. Agricultural geology, at the same time, confers a benefit, in leading him to note what insects and creatures of prey, peculiar to his neighborhood, are most injurious to his domestic animals and growing crops, preparing him to guard against them, or to raise products to which they will do little or no harm. Knowing what grains yield the largest returns with the least labor, he is likewise benefitted by observing to what kinds of stock he can feed them with the greatest advantage. The investigations in question, tending in these and in manifold other ways to bring intelligence to bear in agriculture, as well as in all other pursuits, confer a lasting benefit on individuals, and so also on the commonwealth.

Such being the tendency of geological studies, they will, on the one hand make us acquainted with many products, which, as easily raised in abundance, may be exported with profit. Enquiries of this kind being prosecuted, especially when their results become generally known—as they surely will, if a taste for Geology be acquired in our schools—they must lead to a knowledge as well of what may be advantageously raised, as of those materials which may be most conveniently spared. As the attention of the people is more called to matters of this nature, increased efforts will be made to supply those commodities which are demanded for foreign markets, thus bringing wealth to the individual with a greater development of the internal resources of the state. Valuable articles of various kinds, which are furnished here in abundance, and are not required for home consumption, have already found their way abroad, while a great many others will doubtless be brought to light hereafter, and turned to good account. This will more and more take place, as physical investigations relating to the means within our borders are prosecuted on a wider scale, and especially as a knowledge of the effects of their practical working is extensively diffused, and they thus come to be estimated in a measure more proportionate to their worth. That which however, has been as yet done in Vermont in this direction, is as nothing in comparison with what may, and doubtless will be, effected in future years, as the minds of the young shall be more prominently directed to the internal capabilities of our country, and the people at large be led to look at these matters with a more intelligent insight and a broader wisdom. The more thoroughly conversant we become with the elements around us, the more efficiently shall we be likely to apply them to that for which they are best adapted, for which there is the highest proportional demand, thus securing the greatest benefit that can accrue from their use to the individual and to the State.

By such studies we also learn on the other hand, what commodities cannot be produced to advantage at home, and therefore may be *imported with economy*; also what articles now brought from distant lands might be more profitably furnished from within our own borders. While there are productions, such for instance as are peculiar to a warmer climate, which may be grown here with suitable care, it is usually better to procure them from abroad, when in this latitude we lack the conditions essential to their successful cultivation. To make such importations is the part of wisdom for every people. There are, however, various other products, still obtained to some extent from foreign sources, which we should rather get from our native hills and valleys, or at least from those of our own country, since this can be readily done, and in the end with greater gain to ourselves. Probably as good iron, to mention no other item, can be found and manufactured this side of the Atlantic as in Sweden; and such no doubt will actually be the case, as increased attention is turned to the matter, and improved facilities for the working of ores are invented and made efficient with a gradual advance of knowledge. In this one particular there would be great saving in transportation and otherwise; besides it must bring into active play vast materials which are now lying idle, and engage in honest industry many, who in being left unemployed become drones or culprits in society. The same is equally, it may be more, true of manifold other articles and wares now imported. Accordingly in these matters the State, as well as each member of the community, has or should have a deep interest, and ought to give due heed to the introduction and wide dissemination of investigations which promise to effect so much. The case cited indicates, though vaguely, to what profitable uses studies of this kind may be turned; how private and public good may be advanced, as regards the single point of the intelligent regulation of our imports, and what we may dispense with importing, simply employing to advantage the means within our reach, and thus developing the latent powers of the State.

But the judicious management of imports and exports is by no means the whole, or the main, advantage of geological enquiries to individuals or to the community. *The rearing of men*—of those who shall be able to act the part of discreet, stable and honest men—is of far greater moment. Now those studies which tend to get individuals earnestly engaged, and efficiently enlisted, in any work, are the ones which are to accomplish this amongst the great mass of our citizens. They must, then, be investigations which have to do with the practical, every day, out and in door affairs of life. And this is just what physical enquiries are, and precisely what they promise to effect, to make our common people clear-sighted and efficient, at home in their business, able both to bring out our material resources, and to be a bulwark to the State. Such persons will advance our agricultural interests. As they become aware of what their particular districts stand most in need, they will seek the best and most convenient neighboring locality for a supply, and will be sure to secure it, should it promise

to pay. They will not sit down discouraged about raising apples or pears, because they do not succeed at the first or second trial, but will study out the cause of their previous ill success, and if they find it to be from want of some necessary ingredient in the native soil, perhaps of lime, they will be on the lookout for the supposed lacking material, and perhaps find it in abundance in a different formation only a few miles from their own door. Cases have repeatedly occurred, in which fruit has failed in given localities for years, until agricultural Geology revealed the fact that the whole deficiency might be supplied from the debris of upturned rocks, occurring in other parts of the same neighborhood. Our great need, then, is the proper training of the young. Only let the minds of our children be turned to enquiries of this kind, and improvements in farming will follow almost of necessity. Simply encourage them to enter this field of study, and many will learn to apply its teachings, in all the various trades and departments of activity. Just allow them to become conversant with the practical relations of these things, and there will be a new impulse given to the bringing out of our mineral wealth, to home manufactures, to the supply of our markets with vegetable and animal products, in a word, to the development of our resources in all the kingdoms of nature. Our young men will learn to work with more discretion and prudence, to exercise a greater degree of intelligence and foresight, in the various handicrafts of life. The husbandman, the artisan, the salesman, those in business generally, whatever be the channels of their exertions, coming thus to engage in their respective vocations with an appreciation of the nature of the commodities with which they have to deal, benefits must accrue to all concerned.

That such studies are likely to secure great advantages both to *individuals* and to the *State* should accordingly be very plain. The desirableness of appropriate instruction on the points in question, in view of both private and public good, must be equally apparent. Whatever tends to make thrifty citizens "stayers at home," industrious and reliable men, should receive the approval of all. The importance of such instruction is especially evident, when we remember that one prominent aim of our public schools is the rearing up of faithful and laborious citizens, and that loyalty pervaded by intelligence lies at the very basis of a republican government, and is absolutely necessary to its continued stability. While education generally is of momentous importance, it is likewise peculiarly so, in the direction now under consideration, from the fact that a little attention, judiciously bestowed by one in youth on any such branch of knowledge, tends to give tone to his whole future career, and thus to draw a large number of the rising generation into a field of laborious activity and honorable industry, more intimately connected perhaps than almost any other with the permanent prosperity of Vermont; and still more, many have their minds in this wise early introduced into a province of scientific enquiry and research, in which they become eminent as individuals, useful to the community, and an honor to the land of their birth—into a province, the proper cultivation of which adds much to the lasting welfare of a commonwealth in giving advancement to sound learning, and progress to a true and healthy civilization.

These and similar considerations accordingly suggest the *importance of the early introduction of the study of Geology into our common schools.*

In order, however, to the ultimate success of the matter proposed, several things are requisite; and one of these is an *increase of interest* in the subject on the part of *parents* and of the people at large. That a need of something of this kind is beginning to be felt is abundantly evident. There are, indeed, many indications, not only that there is already somewhat of interest on this point, but, also, that there is even a growing interest in various quarters. Under these circumstances, an enlarged popular sentiment in favor of the matter will come in due course, if its importance be properly held up to view. Only let it be set forth in its true light—merely allow our citizens to see that it is for their good to have all the children in the State instructed in this branch of knowledge—merely enable them to form a correct estimate of the advantage connected with the subject in its various relations—and an appropriate and steadily increasing appreciation will gradually follow. Such being the case, and the matter in question being of the nature it is, the turning of attention more directly to it can do no harm, while it may lead to the more rapid ripening of an already advancing public sentiment, and thus hasten becoming action. In fact, the main and important point now seems to be, simply to give right tone and expression to this rising tendency in the minds of the people, and to foster its expansion in a healthy direction. The attainment of such a result will doubtless be favored by free discussions of the subject, at all fitting times and places; since these must tend to a wiser and more sober estimate of what is needed in our public schools, and in this wise help to secure

an increase of good to the great body of the people of this, and of every coming generation.

Another requisite is an increase of interest in this subject on the part of *teachers*. This end will be naturally and easily attained, if their attention be called to matters of this kind—if the standard of their qualifications be raised—if Geology be added to the list of studies which may be taught in our common schools—they being expected to give instruction in this branch of knowledge, as occasion may require. Now, if those who take charge of our children be thus called to teach this science, and thus become familiar with its outlines, there will be no lack of interest in the subject on their part. We usually remain uninterested in important matters, mainly from our ignorance of them. If we only master them, we shall be wide-awake enough, as to their importance. So will it be on this point, if due attention be given to it by the teachers of the State, to say nothing of Superintendents who are supposed to be wise at the start, and interested in every branch of inquiry. Only let all the teachers, then, become familiar with this one subject, and, (though no pupil be taught, but still more, if many receive instruction,) an impetus will be given to the study of natural science, the influence of which for good no mortal can duly estimate. These reasons, and others which might be urged, accordingly, indicate the desirableness of a provision in our statutes, authorizing the study of Geology, or still better, of Natural History, in our common schools; requiring teachers to be qualified to give instruction, when desired, in its several branches; and recommending that the elements of this department of knowledge, especially in relation to our own State, be taught to the more advanced pupils. In this connection perhaps it should be remarked that the proposed change is no innovation, in any bad sense of the term, but simply an addition to the already existing statutes, in entire consistency with the spirit of our school law, and simply aiming to carry it out, by making suitable provision for the education of every child. That essentially the same thing has been long thought of is sufficiently evident, from a recommendation made by Gov. Eaton, so early as 1848. But, even if it were a new thing, did it promise well, it would deserve consideration, and, should it be likely to secure great good, would be worthy of adoption. And it may be added that the point suggested is prospective in its influence and bearing, it not being presumed that every teacher will be at the start perfectly master of the branch in question, any more than of the History of the United States, the study of which is authorized by statute in our common schools; but that each instructor, in having a high standard presented, will constantly strive after a fuller realization of the end proposed.

Still another requisite, necessary to the successful accomplishment of the aim in view (and which may be entered upon at once,) is the *gradual formation of a cabinet* illustrative of Geology, or rather of the several different departments of Natural History with Geology included. Something of this kind is needed, and may be readily started in each district. As a beginning there is only required a few shelves or cases, in the schoolhouse, for the safe deposit of such specimens, mineralogical, botanical, and the like, as may be found in the neighborhood. In making such a collection, each should have more prominent reference to his own locality, as it is the objects around him, with which he needs especially to become familiar—to learn to recognise, distinguish, and classify. In this way, without waste of time, and at trifling expense, there can be gradually got together, in each school district, many such objects of natural curiosity, as are peculiar to the immediate vicinity, as well as such others as may be from time to time easily procured from a distance. Thus, there may be formed by slow degrees a choice collection, a unique, and if the teacher have taste in that direction, a well-arranged museum, full of interest to all, and furnishing healthful incitement to the opening mind of every child. Much knowledge of animate and of inanimate nature may be in this wise acquired in early youth, while a foundation is laid for future investigations in a department, which is now alas! almost entirely overlooked in our common schools; which yet, as tending to bring to light the native resources of a country, is of very high importance to the farmer, the mechanic, the merchant, and of no small moment to every intelligent citizen.

One other important requisite to the attainment of the end contemplated is a *suitable text-book*. There is need of a single volume, comprising the outlines of Natural History, expressed in succinct, clear and accurate language, and adapted to the wants of pupils in our common schools. So far, however, as I am aware, there is a lack of treatises exactly suited to this purpose. Perhaps no other work would meet the necessities of the case so well for the present, and by its introduction serve as an initiatory step in the direction indicated, as the late Professor Thompson's little manual on the Geography and Geology of Vermont. Indeed, it might well perform a good work for a long while, especially if carefully revised and brought down to the present time.

The necessity for a treatise of just this kind is doubtless evident to the few who have visited our common schools, and witnessed the lamentable ignorance of pupils, and sometimes of teachers, in respect to the most common matters pertaining to our own State. The importance, also, of a proper work must be evident to us all, when we remember that fitting instruction in the several departments of Natural History, the employment of a suitable elementary treatise on Mineralogy, Botany and Zoology, or, indeed, the proper use of the unpretending manual already referred to, would tend to waken thousands to a consciousness of a world for thought and enquiry, always lying before them, but which previously had been, and otherwise would be likely to remain, to them as a sealed book.

It is therefore very clear that *something ought to be done* on the part of individuals and of the State towards the introduction into our schools of a study, which will lead to a greater familiarity with the facts of nature, particularly as relating to our own territory. Money has been expended from year to year, and with a most judicious and far-seeing policy, for the prosecution of a Geological survey, and an appropriation recently made for the publication of the final report.* This will, doubtless, throw light on many points of interest connected with the Geology of Vermont, and tend to develop the native resources of the State. The extent, however, of the benefit actually enjoyed, will depend very much on the preparation of the great body of the citizens to enter into the details, to understand the results arrived at, and appreciate the suggestions made. That all should be in a way to receive a high degree of benefit from this source, is surely desirable; and by no means least, that those should be able to derive advantage from it, who are soon to come upon the stage of active life. It is, indeed, for the interest of the State, as well as of all concerned, that the instruction of the children be of a kind to prepare each for the right use of all means of improvement, and especially of such as will in the end redound most to the general good. Now it is doubtless a fact that some acquaintance with the rocks, minerals, and metals, with the plants, shrubs and trees, with the insects, birds and animals of our neighborhood, must be of far more practical benefit to most in our district schools, and so to the community at large, than a minute knowledge, f r instance, of the Geography and History of China or Hindustan, though the latter need not be neglected, or undervalued. This being so, some provision should be made in this direction, since it is the aim of our common schools to furnish every child with the elements of a good education—to fit such as may enjoy no higher grade of instruction for the duties of their vocation—to lead to the formation of right intellectual habits—to waken in them an interest in those more prominent departments of enquiry, which are useful to all—as well as, generally, to incite a taste for investigation, which will not end with childhood, but go on unfolding and ripening with all the powers of the maturing man.

Since it may seem to some, that the introduction of the study of Geology into our common schools must involve an increase of expenditure, I will conclude with the remark, that, were there no other reason for the measure proposed, it might be urged on the simple ground of *economy*. The additional outlay need be to each district only the merest trifle. But, even allowing that it may be great, if the noble point aimed at be reached, it must still be on the whole a saving investment. Whatever serves to lead the young into sympathy with the truth, tends to render them stable and discreet, and thus useful members of society. If putting them to school, and bestowing upon them the highest privileges, will give them the right turn, in this wise fitting them to fulfil the responsibilities of an honest calling, the expense is as nothing in comparison with the good accomplished. Can they by any such means be made upright, sober, steadfast, law-abiding citizens, an end is secured, the worth of which cannot be rated in dollars and cents, though at the same time a vast gain is secured to the State, as respects even its material interests. Money thus invested is a wise forestallment—on the maxim that prevention is better than cure—guarding against future rebellions, the suppression of which would cost millions. If the children of the poor grow up with the impression, that they are uncared for and despised—that their education is neglected—that there is a disposition to trample them under foot—they will be likely to become vagabonds in the community, or outcasts from society; and the little expense that may be saved to day will be far overbalanced by the taxation made necessary tomorrow, either for the support of poor-houses, jails and State-prisons, or for the maintenance of a standing army, as our sole protection from the stormy passions of an ignorant, debased and outraged populace. Let the children of the whole State, then, all without exception, enjoy the means of instruction. Though the present outlay be

* It should be remarked that this was written previous to the appearance of the late *Geological Report* of the State.

considerable, generously bestow it upon them; and with perfect confidence in divine Providence, look for the promised reward to return after many days, in that increase of thrift and prosperity which an intelligent, honest and hard-handed yeomanry confer on the commonwealth and all its interests. Yes, grant these favors to the young with the unfaltering hope that they will become discerning and industrious, temperate and upright, men and women. Grant these privileges, if you please, on prudential grounds; if you like, grant them as the cheapest in the long run; but grant them, also and above all, because the fundamental idea of our government supposes and requires virtue and intelligence in the people; grant them, indeed and especially, that every child may be so reared up as to make a good member of society, that he may have all the facilities necessary to his becoming an honest and loyal citizen, an intelligent and Christian man, able faithfully to fulfill the duties of his calling, to serve his day and generation with integrity, in whatever sphere it may be his lot to act, and thus to be an honor to the Commonwealth, and a crown of glory to his native land.

These are true and honest words and come from one who, recognizing the neglect of all branches of natural history, as a serious defect in his own early education, has reaped both profit and pleasure from the devotion of a portion of more recent years, to the acquisition of a knowledge of the neglected branches.

I am aware that a proposition to devote any portion of the time of our children in the common schools to the pursuit of such studies as Botany, Geology or Physiology, will be considered by many to be as strange as it is thought to be foolish. There is a prevalent impression that the prime object of the common schools is to qualify children to transact the necessary business of life, and as "Reading, Writing, and Ciphering" are the most direct channels through which this necessary qualification is most rapidly to be attained, therefore the whole time of our schools, and all the efforts of our instructors, must be given to these branches exclusively till a certain proficiency be attained, and them other matters may receive attention. Just here, in this very idea to which I have alluded, is to be found the origin of much of the shortcomings of our schools.

There is no mystery in Arithmetic, for instance, that needs for its acquisition more than one year of the time of an intelligent child, who can read with facility and apprehension; and yet with an average attendance upon our schools of probably some seven or eight years, good scholars in Arithmetic are the exceptions and not the rule. And why? The answer is, because in our haste to impart that capacity "to cipher" which is mistaken for a knowledge of Arithmetic, we neglect truth that we may teach the mere formulas; overlook reasoning in the effort to impress mathematical conclusions; and strive to impart information by impressing facts upon the memory, rather than to bestow by mental discipline a power of thought that shall render knowledge tributary to mind. And thus we fail in many cases most miserably. If we could sever for a time our immediate connection with the schools, and temporarily ignore our deep interest in their administration, the fact that all the years of the boyhood and girlhood of our State are spent in painful efforts to acquire knowledge in the common schools, and yet that a good accountant, or an elegant reader is a rarity in our schools, would be considered the most stupendous humbug of the age.

The intellectual, like the physical appetites of our children, are omnivorous, and variety and diversity of food are absolutely necessary to

robust health. If we would enlarge the scope of our schools, and thus enable ourselves to offer a wider variety to the infinite diversity of mind that will resort to them, we should not only in less time give more knowledge of the branches that have been hitherto allowed to monopolize the time of our schools, but we should stir a new appetite for knowledge, waken new aspirations, and furnish abundant material for their gratification.

In a recent address by Horace Greely, at the State Fair at Rutland, he says:

"Your Popular Education is defective in plan and scope. I may speak wildly, for I have not entered one of your common schools for more than thirty years; but in the four winters during which I enjoyed their advantages, I never saw a treatise on Agriculture nor on any of the subjacent sciences—Geology, Chemistry, or Botany—in any Vermont school-house; nay, I was not there reminded that Agriculture held any definite relation to the knowledge therein imparted, or that the sciences I have named had an existence. I gave hours of my own scanty school time to Arithmetic and other studies holding but a remote and secondary relation to the practical business of life, which I have since sadly grudged them. I do not say that these arts were not worth having; I only insist that there were others that I needed more and which would have served me better. How little comparatively has it availed me to journey across two continents, and note the rivers, lakes, mountains, cities, towers, fortresses, cathedrals and battle-fields which illustrate so much of their recent, human history, while that far older and grander history—which treats of profounder convulsions and more stupendous changes—the history imbedded in their soils and graven on their rocks—was almost a sealed book to me! The stones slowly, painfully upraised into a sky-piercing spire, a time-defying pyramid, are objects of legitimate interest; but the vein of quartz projected from earth's central fires by some primeval convulsion through miles of stubborn granite, of toughest basalt—the boulder of a thousand tuns dropped casually by some vast iceberg in the gray dawn of some pre-Adamite antiquity on some sunny plain of the Temperate Zone, and lying there strange and solitary to this hour—I mourn that all this, thro' the misdirection of my school-boy opportunity, though a fountain of profitable meditation, of rational interest, to so many, is to me only a subject of vain repining, of vague wonder, of ignorant and perhaps blundering allusion.

Of course, if you have wisely changed all this since my school-boy days, my criticism will be locally inapplicable. But my most recent glances at schools, from Montreal to San Francisco, showed me improvement, indeed, in details, but no radical, comprehensive renovation of system—here a twig pruned and there a new shoot started, but no healthy and vigorous graft inserted. In the new emporium of the farthest West, as well as in the venerable city by the St. Lawrence, I found girls of thirteen tying their brains into hard knots over Algebraic puzzles which, even when duly solved, added nothing to their stock of useful knowledge, while of first truths respecting the elements and constitution of the earth under *our feet*, the air we breathe, the food we eat, the fluids we imbibe or em*ploy, they were still left* in contented and almost total ignorance.

I would change this by choosing for the principal reading-book in every common school a condensed statement of primary truths bearing on Agriculture, like that recently compiled for the State of Massachusetts by Messrs. Flint and Emerson, or a more comprehensive exposition of Rural Economy irradiated by the science of chemistry, like that of Prof. Youmans. I would have these not merely read by the higher grades of pupils of both sexes, but I would have questions on the lesson of the day propounded to every pupil at its close, until each should be rendered master of all the book aims to impart. Then I would confine the mathematical studies of every girl to the four simple rules of arithmetic, and incite no boy to go beyond the rule of three, until after mastering the fundamental laws and truths of Natural Science, thus laying the foundations of a true knowledge of Nature calculated to render every subsequent day's labor on the farm a source of additional knowledge, and every walk or ride at once a lesson and a joy.

With such an outset, I should confidently hope to educate a generation of farmers' sons of whom all the brighter and more aspiring would not desert the paternal hearth, the paternal calling, with the celerity of a hen's ducklings trooping from the nest to the brook, and I should further hope to fix the attention of such sons on problems concerning agriculture of which their fathers will hardly listen with patience to the discussion. Nevertheless, I shall not shrink from delivering my message."

Such language for many years has seemed to be very sensible talk for an agricultural meeting, and by many its absurdity would never be perceived until we attempt as friends of education, to do in the schools precisely what every man's common sense declares should be done somewhere, and can never be thoroughly done elsewhere.

Again, all acquainted with our schools are aware that a prevalent lack of vitality, a sort of listless lifelessness is the one general curse with which they are everywhere afflicted. This is to a great degree attributable to some cause to which I have just alluded. The very act of considering the school as an instrumentality by which a sufficient knowledge of reading and arithmetic to enable pupils to transact in an ordinary way the common business of life is to be imparted, has in itself a tendency to divest the teacher of all enthusiasm and the occupation of the scholars of all power of inspiration. This is not the purpose of the schools of a republican State. The commonwealth needs men and women. It is the business of the schools to educate men and women. To give one the competency to transact ordinary business, is in no sense to educate him for the service of the commonwealth. It has been well said that to educate a man, is *to give him complete command of all his powers.*

Here then is the true work of the schools; mind, heart, imagination, fancy, and not by any means least, physical strength, all are to be developed to the utmost, and the schools of the State are to be dedicated to this noblest conceivable work of making the growing citizens of the state worthy inheritors of the fruits of the labors and sacrifices of their fathers.

All minds do not with the same aptitude devote themselves to the acquisition of mathematics, hence the effort to constrain, by an iron rule,

the minds of all children to the study of arithmetic until a certain specific attainment has been reached, is as unnatural and absurd as it is tyrannical and useless; and persistence in the effort tends to devitalize and sometimes almost to dehumanize our schools.

It is gratifying therefore, from the statistics to know that regular progress has been made for a number of years in the right direction. This appears from the increased attention that is now given to various branches, that have in past time been much neglected, as well as from the great improvement in methods of instruction that have been adopted.

In Geography, for instance, the number of pupils has been steadily increasing now for several years. And in no other branch, has the same degree of improvement been manifested. The text-books in Geography are incomparably superior in every respect to any that were known a few years since; indeed it would be difficult to suggest improvement in some that are extant. And although our citizens have been exceedingly slow to procure and furnish to their schools the articles of apparatus, that now everywhere abound, still to the credit of our teachers it may be said, that in no other branch of study has there been shown so great a readiness to accept and adopt suggestions that lead to improved methods of instruction, as in regard to Geography.

Few, if any of the branches that are taught in our schools are susceptible of being made so attractive under proper instruction, as is Geography. When taught by mere question and answer, and when reliance is had upon the mere power of the mind to retain isolated facts without elucidation, connection or association, it is the dreariest known method of wasting time to no useful purpose. But when by oral instruction, by the use of Outline Maps, by Map-drawing, by object lessons, and by illustrations drawn from the science of Physical Geography, the competent teacher allows the subject to appear clothed in its inherent attractiveness, the recitations in Geography alone will do much to renew the life of the school.

A very decided improvement is also indicated in regard to written exercises in the schools. An increase of eighteen per cent in the number who have given their attention to composition is revealed by the statistics, and is a very pleasant indication. It would seem to require little argument or proof to sustain the propositions, that the power to give apt and forceful expression to thought is one of the most valuable results of education—that this power can only be attained even to a moderate extent, by long practice, and therefore that written exercises in composition should be required in every public school, of all the elder scholars. And yet a strange and sometimes perverse spirit of opposition to a course so entirely reasonable and necessary, has often been manifested. In a recent volume of Vermont Reports will be found a decision of the Supreme Court, by which the Court find that as English Grammar is the art as well as science of writing and speaking the English language correctly, and as arts are to be acquired by practice rather than instinct, therefore that a written exercise in composition is a proper requirement in a public school. That such an adjudication should have been necessary, proves the exis-

tence of the spirit of hostility to exercises in composition, to which I have alluded, in a manner more conclusive than satisfactory.

The unusual increase of attention given to this matter in the schools during the past year, is specially hopeful.

## MUSIC IN THE SCHOOLS.

If, in the language of the law, the teacher stands "in the place of the parent"—then the good teacher will resemble the good parent. But if this be so, it follows, that that school is the best, which in its aims and purposes and means and results and general condition, most nearly resembles a good home.

The conclusion seems inevitable, and contains the material for various deductions and inferences applicable in somewhat unexpected directions.

If a knowledge of music and a capacity for its enjoyment, renders a man more happy, and generally makes him a better man at home, it must make him a better citizen; and if this be true, it is difficult to see any very valid reason why music should not be to a certain extent taught in the public schools.

I am glad to say that within the past few years, as the result of much public discussion, both within and without the State, the practice of opening and closing the schools with vocal music, has been rapidly gaining ground. This practice has been long prevalent in European schools, and in some countries has become universal; and it has, within the past twenty-five years, been introduced into the public schools of many of our own cities and large towns. An opening exercise in singing has prevailed with great success, and to almost universal satisfaction in the schools in Boston and New York. And here and wherever known and used, vocal music as an aid to the discipline and moral culture of children in school, has received the enthusiastic commendation of the best friends of the schools.

In our own associations of teachers, the matter has been much discussed, and preferring to use the language of another in regard to a matter that I have so often dwelt upon officially in every part of the State, I insert here an address or essay upon the subject, that was delivered before the Chittenden County Teachers' Association, a year since, by the Rev. T. J. Holmes, of Richmond, and which Mr. Holmes has kindly allowed me to use:

### VOCAL MUSIC IN THE COMMON SCHOOLS.

It is impossible to consider this subject intelligently, without having correct ideas as to the object of common school instruction. True education is not simply cramming the head with knowledge. It aims to expand and elevate every part of the soul; nourishing its better tastes, giving development and practice to all its wondrous powers, stimulating and ennobling its purposes; it aims to elevate *the man*. The number is not small of those who think that the real office of schools is, to develop and harden the

muscles of body and mind, as a training for business. Knowledge they value only as capital, which, put to interest, will help to fill miserly coffers. They appreciate readily the worth of a book which will reveal to them the secret of getting the largest crop of potatoes or of raising the best stock. But beyond the acquisition of learning like this, their aspirations rarely stretch, and the prevalence of such ideas reduces greatly the number of our educated men. Many a parent, able to furnish his children with all the appliances of a ripe education, denies them the priceless gift because he cannot see how it will make them sharper salesmen. As though to drive shrewd bargains, were the chief end of man. This tendency is proverbially strong in a country like this, where everybody is in a hurry to get rich. No one, here, can stop to take comfort or enjoyment—all the vast resources of happiness within the soul, are neglected—their voices all hushed by the coarse clamors of avarice. The godlike powers of the mind are spent in the one single aim, not to be happy, not to be useful, but simply to be rich. This idea pervading so thoroughly the national life, naturally subordinates to itself all other considerations. Everything is valued by the test—"Will it pay?" and the only currency in which payment is wanted, is that of dollars and cents.

We need, therefore, to guard against wrong notions with regard to education—to remember it is not the culture of any one part of the soul, but the harmonious development of the whole; not merely the instrument for getting material advantage, but the means of securing better good—of providing, within the individual, resources from which he may draw unfailingly for his own enjoyment and that of his fellow men; the means, in short, of fitting for *life*, for death, too, and the life beyond.

It is only with such a liberal conception, that there can seem propriety in making the culture of the finer powers a part of a child's education. It is chiefly on such a ground that *music* is urged as an element in the instruction of our common schools. It is by no means conceded that the study of music has only an indirect benefit, that its value is merely æsthetic—for it assists greatly in the acquisition of advantages that are more practical. For instance, all teachers who have tested the matter experimentally, praise warmly its worth as a *means of discipline*. There is something in the prompt and measured time of a spirited melody, that infuses a habit of method and harmony into a whole school. What could be a more effective charm to quiet a multitude of children, at the opening of a session, and fit them for work; and, moreover, as every teacher knows, there are many odd moments scattered through the day, which it is difficult to use to advantage. There is no time for a recitation, it is not the hour for recess, and yet discipline must suffer unless the school can be kept occupied. Now what can so well fit into such little nooks, as a familiar cheerful song?—and it is an advantage that this employment, answering so good a purpose, is, in its nature, recreation. The children are occupied, and at the same time rested. When the mind of a scholar has been stretched, for an hour, in hard application, it is economy of time to let it unbend a little, to freshen its strength and receive a stimulus to new industry. And such recreation is valuable because it rests but does not dissipate. It is not idleness, but a change of occupation. Frequent recesses would be unprofitable, since the ideas of the pupils are then scattered, and it requires some time to call them back to study. But no such disadvantage is connected with music. A school may stop for a moment and unite in a song, and when the melody ceases, they are refreshed and ready at once for their books. The wheels have been oiled, and the machinery runs more smoothly and turns out better work.

Besides this general benefit, the study of vocal music promotes directly one branch of instruction of great importance, viz., *elocution*. How few educated people are effective readers. Very many can pronounce politely a little French, or a little German, who yet cannot speak well their own tongue. Good reading depends on the culture of the voice; its expression, pitch, modulation, compass, and on the distinct enunciation of letters and words. But careful drilling on these points, our schools, to a great extent, neglect. And precisely this would be afforded by systematic instruction in vocal music.

Thus, it is evident, the study proposed has a very practical use. It improves elocution, is a valuable aid in enforcing healthy discipline, and affords a means of resting the mind from fatigue and fitting it better for work.

But on other grounds we recommend it. If it had no relation to other branches of instruction,—for its own intrinsic worth it would deserve much consideration.

One of its important benefits is this. The *words* of the hymns are a great instrumentality for fastening, in the mind and heart, right sentiment. Verses, committed to memory and sung again and again in school, are repeated at home and everywhere till the thoughts enter into the very life of the soul. If these songs ring as they should *with noble sentiment, with moral truth, with the ideas that underlie civil freedom—they cannot sound in the voice* without echoing in the heart; and thought made familiar by

association with charming melody, is fastened and cannot be forgotten. It is this principle which is illustrated in that familiar saying of an eminent man, that he "would rather make the ballads of a nation than its laws."

Besides, there are influences for good derived from the *music* alone. Its tendency is *refining*. A character touched by the sweet breath of music cannot be rough and coarse. The sharp edges will be smoothed off. Music, more than any other human influence, awakes the tenderest sensibilities. It can touch chords that will vibrate to every emotion The swelling tones of an organ, floating into the soul, carry with them a spirit of devotion. The strange harmonies of an orchestra paint for the ear every passion of the heart. In martial strains is a fire that keeps glowing a soldier's fortitude. If the heart throbs with gladness, or sighs with sorrow, music is its best expression. And this power to stir the emotions is such, that it often affects those who are impervious to other influences. We see this in religion. Hearts long shut, fastened against feeling, may be unlocked by music. Men that will neither be frightened by warning, nor won by entreaty, nor forced by logic, are often melted by the sweetness of a simple hymn.

So, it is the legitimate influence of music to lift the soul as with a golden cord to a higher plane—above sense, to the spiritual. There would be other advantages from the introduc ion of this study into our schools.

By the cultivation of musical taste and talent, a sense of pleasure is furnished, from which may flow increasing happiness through life—and by this means the heart is kept fresh and elastic, and is better fitted to enjoy the pleasures, to bear the trials and do the work of human experience.

Then, there is another important aspect of the same benefit. To provide an exhaustless source of innocent pleasure, would furnish the most effective safeguard against injurious pleasures. The best way to start the young in the path of virtue, safe from the seductive allurement of wicked indulgence, is to have the heart stored with sources of enjoyment that is consistent with virtue—and without this, no influence in the right direction can be of much avail. You cannot, by arbitrary command, force a child to grow up virtuous. He may have the semblance of goodness while the fetters bind him. But bye and bye these restraints will be removed, or may be snapped by a growing will—and then, there is reason to fear, he will hate the virtue he was forced to assume. The great moral lesson that, more than any other, needs to be impressed upon the young, is that no life is so full of real solid happiness as an upright life. Virtue has enough resources of pleasure, only let them be developed. Encourage every enjoyment consistent with right. Let all cheerless morbid views, which libel the truth, be banished, and virtue, for its own sake, will be loved and lived by many who now hate it as a foe to happiness.

Now there is no one source of innocent pleasure so full, and yet so simple as music. It furnishes the purest happiness for the fireside, and so gives to home a charm against outside fascinations; in short, it cheers and gladdens the whole of life. And is there any other source of healthy enjoyment which could, so easily and at so little expense, be placed within the reach of every boy and girl in the land?

Such are the practical benefits of the study of mus c. If these are real, they should not be confined, as they generally are, to the few who are rich enough to buy them, but should be as free as knowledge of other kinds; and this can only be effected by making the study an element in a c mmon school education.

Many minds will raise the question whether such a thing is practicable. Some object that attainment in music depends on native ability, and therefore would not be possible to children in general. Nature, it is true, does very much, and there would be different degrees of progress as in other studies. But, according to the testimony of teachers, there are very few children who could not be taught to sing. The study must be commenced at an early age, when the vocal organs are tender and susceptible—just as a child needs to learn a foreign language, when young, to acquire and retain a true pronunciation.

The ear, too, must be cultivated. We see many adults who have not the slightest discrimination of musical sounds, but it is owing, in most cases, to defect in early education. It is rare that a child, brought up in a musical atmosphere, has not some taste and ability for music; and if the study were introduced among all the children of our schools, but a very small number could fail to derive from it valuable benefit.

But even if this difficulty were less formidable, some may doubt the practicability of making it a part of school instruction. Fortunately, this is no longer a question. It has been thoroughly tried, and with entire success. The idea originated in Germany, and spread thence into Holland, Switzerland, France and Great Britain, and finally to the United States.

It was first inaugurated in this country, in Boston, about 24 years ago, at the recommendation of the Academy of Music. It was tried originally in a single Grammar school, and the experiment was regarded as altogether satisfactory. From that time it gained increasing favor and was more generally introduced, till at present, it has a place in all their public schools; and judging from their annual reports, it is more highly approved and valued the more it is tested.

In the city of New York, a fair examination has had the same result. The Superintendent of Public Schools there, having, within the past six months, been applied to for his opinion on the subject, says :—"We have had music taught in our schools for the past ten years. We began very gradually, but now have introduced it in all our Departments—even the Primary. If the ordinary teachers are not qualified to give instruction in it, other persons are employed especially for this purpose. We aim not merely to educate the voice by the practice of tunes by rote, but to teach as far as practicable, the science of music. We have given the plan a thorough trial, and such is our appreciation of its value, on various grounds, that we feel we *could not on any account dispense with it.*"

These two places are mentioned because there, the system has been most extensively and critically tried. Very many other cities would bear the same testimony.

And in smaller towns and communities in the country, it is just as feasible. Its details would be necessarily different, but we could have the essential advantages. Precisely how, it is not the place here to suggest. If its *importance* be admitted, ways will be readily devised of carrying it into effect.

## GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF VERMONT.

In the last Annual Report, referring to the fact that in our schools neither custom nor law require or expect any special attention to be given to the acquisition of accurate and complete knowledge of our own State, I made use of the following language :

"But there is one subject to which, at this juncture particularly, the mind of every lover of our State should be turned.

No special attention is given in any of our schools, to imparting a thorough knowledge of our own State. The very purpose of the common schools, the inducement to their establishment and support by the State, is that therein all the children of the State may be properly and thoroughly prepared, so far as practicable, for the duties of their future citizenship. And in order to this an accurate knowledge of the State itself, its position, character, capacity, soil, climate, productions, its history, its institutions, its government, is really indispensable. Hence it is painful and humiliating to visit the schools—the nurseries of Vermont freemen—in all sections of the State, and to find here and there in all portions, most excellent instruction given in all the so called common branches of education, but nowhere any effort even, to imbue the minds of the children with an intelligent and patriotic appreciation of their birth, or of the generous and liberal institutions under whose beneficent influences they are enjoying so great a measure of happiness and peace.

It may be doubted whether a large Map, or History, or Gazetteer of Vermont can be found in ten common schools within her borders; and it is shameful to be said, and yet it is too true, that ignorance of our own State rather than knowledge, is the prevailing characteristic of our schools; and as a necessary consequence, many older than school children may be found who are scarcely less than ignorant of the character and resources of their native State.

Now it may be said generally, that an intelligent, thoughtful and well founded patriotic attachment to the land of his birth and residence, and to its government and institutions, is an indispensable characteristic of a truly good republican citizen, and that such an intelligent and patriotic attachment is impossible without a thorough knowledge and considerate appreciation of the reasons for such attachment. And it follows, that any republican State that allows this important matter to be overlooked in its schools, will not and cannot escape the injurious consequences that result therefrom."

And another year's reflection, with an increased familiarity with the condition of the schools, has still more fully impressed me with the importance of this topic.

The same, or at least no better, state of public affairs still exists. Now as then our country is engaged in a struggle for its very existence; now as then the public mind and general heart is oppressed with a sense of apprehension and consciousness of danger which could only result from civil war. To every thoughtful man's mind the question of duty is hourly presenting itself. "What can I do, and what ought I to do?" are the unspoken yet inevitable words that ring persistently in our ears.

Whatever differences of opinion may exist in regard to the wisdom of the measures which may, at different times, have been adopted by the Government for the suppression of the Rebellion, and whatever doubts may have prevailed as to the devotion or efficiency of our Generals in command; it is certain that a formidable Rebellion, aiming at and endangering the existence of the Government which we cherish, still exists, and has been waging deadly and oftentimes successful war for nearly eighteen months. It is no less certain that ample power, of men, means and money, has during all this dreary year and a half been within the control of the loyal states, to have effectually destroyed, to have annihilated this gigantic treason. And why has it not been done?

By hundreds and thousands, our loyal fellow citizens have laid themselves upon the altar of our country and nobly died, that their children and our children might live in the dignity and happiness of republican citizenship. Southern breezes laden not with the balmy breath of the magnolia, but clammy with the stifling and pestilential exhalations of gloomy swamps, and burdened with the anguish of dying men, our fellows, our brothers, where death is rendered unspeakably bitter by the doubt lest they die in vain—come sighing and wailing among our lovely hills and asking "where are the sons of the mountain? is the memory of their "fathers perished from the recollections of the children?"

And during these eventful weeks while the very existence of everything that is dear to us as a people has been staked in the contest, while the blood of noble men has been nobly shed for the cause of God and Liberty, we have been quietly pursuing the even tenor of our way. Peace has been with us, plenty has cherished us; the ordinary business of life has jogged along; commercial, agricultural, mechanical and professional avocations, have been followed as usual. While the European nations are looking with intense anxiety upon the existing contest, and calculating the probabilities of the future, we are comparatively quiet. With national existence at stake, with life, liberty and prosperity all dependent upon the result of the struggle; with outnumbered friends retreating before a victorious band of traitors, and hostile guns sending their echoes among the arches of the national capitol, with our Vermont Regiments surrounded by the foe and calling for help—we in Vermont, are casting lots, not for the distribution of raiment, but to secure the rich privilege of dealing in turnips and tape, while men are in arms striking for the right.

Since the power to subdue the Rebellion has, beyond a question, been in the possession of the loyal states, their neglect to exercise it indicates either that the people as a whole, underestimate the malignity and power of the Rebellion, or that there is a prevalent pusillanimity that disinclines men to put themselves in the way of danger, or that the early freshness and vigor of our appreciation of the rich blessings of civil and religious liberty has abated, and that our patriotic love of our country and our state, and of the institutions that through them we enjoy, has grown cold and faint.

We are being taught that Peace has its evils, as well as War; and among them is the danger that in the plenitude of its blessings, the toils and labors and sacrifices which formed its purchase price shall be forgotten. For nearly fifty years the foot of no armed foe has pressed the soil of our common land. For almost half a century Peace has brooded over us and continuous and unvaried prosperity has filled the cup of our enjoyments, until we seem to have become sodden with happiness and drunken with prosperity. Busied in profiting by our many opportunities, we have been engrossed in the pursuit of happiness and wealth, till we have nearly forgotten that the thousand rich blessings which we have so quietly and thoughtlessly enjoyed, have not been the result of accident, that they do not come down like the rain and the dew, but that they were bought with a price, and that their preservation for ourselves and those who shall follow us, is the highest and the most difficult duty which devolves upon us.

When, naturally finding its opportunity in the climacteric rottenness of a debauched Government, the long threatened Rebellion burst forth, and the first gun at Sumter roused a mighty nation from their slumbers, the minds of men were forcibly impressed with the recollection of the warning voice of him who sleeps amid the shades of Mount Vernon, that seemed to whisper even from the grave, "Eternal vigilance is the price of Liberty." Should we be thoroughly and permanently aroused from our slumbers of dreamy enjoyment, even this Rebellion will bear good fruit.

How shall that vigilance be promoted? The answer is by no means difficult, at least to a certain extent,—it must be taught in the public schools.

The Prussians say that "whatever you would have appear in a na-"tion's life, you must put into its schools"; and if this maxim be ever or anywhere true, how much more so now and here. If we would have courage, devotion, and a highminded patriotism to be the dominant traits of our national or state character, we must teach them in our schools.

It is worse than idle to suppose that Arithmetic and Grammar, Science and the classics, everything that is worthy of acquisition, is to be taught with diligent and painful labor, while we may expect that an unselfish love of country and home will come as it were by instinct, unsought, and untaught. We must *teach* our children in the earlier and fresher days of youth, to become brave and true and magnanimous.

Patriotism the highest, holiest and best of all the traits of the character *of a true republican*, will not happen, or come of course; in itself

the culmination and crowning "*ensemble*" of all that we love and admire in republican character, it is the result of culture, it comes by training.

But the patriotism to which we refer is to be measured by no common guage. No mere blind attachment to the land of our birth will compass it. No besotted love of that to which we have been accustomed—no selfish support of measures and men because they minister to the success of personal schemes, can meet the requirements of that patriotism which is the great present need of our country.

In these days of light and in this favored country, he alone is a patriot whose love of country emanating from heart and mind, absorbs and engrosses his whole being, and constrains him to hold himself and all that he is and all that he has as belonging to her, and lent to him for her good; the warmest emotions of whose heart, and the clearest convictions of whose mind, combine to render him a calm, intelligent, clear-headed, and appreciative, as well as devoted and patriotic citizen. The patriotism that is indispensable to the idea of a perfect republican citizenship rests upon mind as well as heart, it thinks and reasons as well as loves. Rising far above the mere fond and tender attachment that comes from habit, it informs the mind with a full and considerate appreciation of the eternal truth and justice upon which the institutions of our country rest; it exhibits them in all their commanding attractiveness, and becoming a rational conclusion and a principle, as well as a passion, it teaches gratitude for the past, confidence in the present and hope in the future; it inculcates the pursuit of virtue, knowledge and power, for the sake of the country to whose service they may be devoted, as well as for their own intrinsic worth; and so possessing the whole man, mind and heart and soul, it urges him to press forward toward perfection, that he may bring to the service of his country a life and a death that shall be worthy of such devotion. Such patriotism cannot happen; resting upon conviction, and having knowledge for its very essence, it must come by patient, persistent, and powerful training.

The schools can possibly have no higher or better work,—it is, in fact, the very end and purpose for which they were organized. Public schools are not so much a matter of praise-worthiness, in republican states, as they are of necessity. Republican states can only stand strong when based upon general intelligence and virtue, and that this indispensable intelligence and virtue may be secured, schools are established,—that they, supported by the State and not dependent upon local charity or caprice, may give that nurture and culture without which the State cannot sustain itself. Schools thus are a matter of self-preservation, of necessity. In the words of Mr. King, Superintendent of Benson:

"The great majority of the people fail to realize fully the necessity of the public schools to the life and permanence of the State. Most regard them as a very convenient arrangement in which they have no particular interest unless they happen to have children to send. The true principle on which the common school is based, is that of necessity; and every citizen of the State has a direct and personal interest in the well being of its schools. New England's schools have raised her to her present high position. Her citizens are loyal, intelligent and thoughtful. Had the South possessed similar means for the mental and moral culture of all classes, the slave rebellion would never have cast its dark shadow over the land. The strength of our Government con-

sists more in the intelligent minds of the people than the muscles of their arms. Republicanism depends on the intelligence of the people; despotism rests upon ignorance."

The qualifications of citizens for the duties of their citizenship is the end and purpose for which schools were established. Why then do they so carefully attend to the mint and cummin of Arithmetic and Grammar, and neglect the weightier matter of the direct qualification of youth for the duties of citizenship? When we find in our schools upwards of forty thousand children studying Arithmetic, the fact that there is probably not a single class in all the schools who are receiving instruction in regard to the Government and Constitution of our own State, is strong proof of a serious deficiency.

But this intelligent love of country cannot be made so much the special object of specific training in a particular direction, as it may be aimed at as a result of general culture. As intellectual ability alone can never make a patriot from a knave, so neither can any success in heart-culture convert a stupid clod into a useful citizen. Moral and mental culture must combine their efforts.

And herein consists the very great importance that attaches to school discipline; not so much that thoroughly wise and effectual discipline is essential to the successful conduct of any particular school, or set of schools, as because it is in the hours of study and recreation while in school, that are planted and fostered the germs of those moral habitudes that, fully developed in after life, bring blessings or curses to the individual and profit or loss to the community.

The eye of the teacher should look out above and beyond the labors and toils and responsibilities of the day, and see in imagination the future men and women, who will ere long stand by his side and share in all the burdens and duties of citizenship, and who whether the teacher will it or not, and whether he is even conscious of it or not, are each day receiving impressions from the eye and voice, and character itself of the teacher, no less than from his positive and direct instructions, that will in the future harden into character and make or mar the man.

He is the best teacher then who most nearly resembles the kind, considerate and tender, but conscientious and determined father; and that school is the most perfect that likens itself the nearest to an intelligent, orderly and loving home circle.

Schools engaged in the formation of republican character, should have a scheme of school discipline, entirely accordant in character with the scope and tendency of those institutions to support and strengthen which they were organized.

The plan of government in school should have as little of the arbitrary and despotic as can consist with the necessities of school life. It should appeal to the reason and the conscience, rather than to the passions and fears. While it is strong it should be kind, if firm it should be gentle, if like granite in its unwavering determination, it should still be reasonable as truth itself.

An ardent thirst for knowledge and an earnest love of truth, for

their own sakes and their moral influences, as well as for the advanta they bring, should be carefully inculcated.

The plays and sports, the manners and language and deportment of pupils towards each other in recess and at intermission, should be constant objects of the teacher's attention; and here particularly, truth, courage, frankness, kindness and gentleness, should be encouraged with express reference to their becoming abiding traits of the character of the future citizen.

But an intelligent citizenship requires a clear head as well as a warm and true heart—it needs ability as well as true heartedness. He who is shortly to become a legal voter, and therefore a sovereign lawmaker of a republican commonwealth, will of necessity have force and usefulness, in direct proportion to his acquaintance with the Government, laws, institutions, condition, capacities, and wants of the State.

A special and accurate knowledge of the Geography and History, the resources, the capacities, the laws and institutions of Vermont, then, is a legitimate and should be the leading object of instruction in Vermont schools.

The neglect of these things in our schools, is so entire as to have the appearance of design rather than accident. As was remarked in a preceding quotation from the last Report, ignorance of the History and Geography of our own State seems to be the rule, rather than the exception; and in this respect we stand in marked contrast with some of our neighbors.

The general familiarity of the pupils of many of the Massachusetts schools with the History and Geography of their own State, is singularly pleasing to a stranger—her history is made a common study, and in the hearts of her children, Plymouth Rock and Bunker Hill are words of deep significance—the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, and the struggles of Lexington and Concord have consecrated the soil of the "Old Bay State" to the undying veneration of her children.

Wherever you enter the public schools, maps of Massachusetts and charts and books upon her resources and capacities abound, and constant dwelling upon the theme has made a patriotic attachment to their State and country a proverbial and almost an inevitable trait of her people.

But with us little effort in this direction has ever been made. I never have seen in all the schools which I have visited in Vermont five State or County maps upon the walls. Our children have no more definite or accurate knowledge of their own State than of any other, and hence it happens, incredible as it may seem, that the citizens of the State often know as much or more of the resources and characteristics of adjoining States as of their own.

The astonishment, and almost incredulity aroused by the statistical facts cited in the report of last year in reference to the subject of emigration, sufficiently prove the extent of this lack of knowledge.

The agricultural capacity of the State as a whole, is not generally known, and at this very day, the inhabitants of the Southern Counties have no adequate appreciation of the beauty and richness of Northern and Western Vermont, while the agricultural and mineral wealth of the Southern portion *of the State is* known by few.

All this should be changed. The science of Geography, in the schools, should like Charity "begin at home." The neighborhood, the town, the County and the State of each pupil, should become perfectly familiar, within certain limits, before an effort to advance in any other direction is permitted. Mountains, Rivers, Lakes and a few chief towns, elevations, valleys, and counties, should be indelibly fixed in the mind, and made permanent and reliable by constant exercises in map drawing, until a picture of the main features of his own State should staad out before the mind of every scholar as plainly as her mountains stand before his eye. Then to this should be added a thorough knowledge, to a certain extent, of the soils, productions, business, resources and capacities of the different portions of the State.

And with these should be conjoined some adequate knowledge of the history of the State, and of the men whose labors and determination have left for our enjoyment a system of government that has blessed us beyond our deserts.

It is strange to how a great a degree the prominent facts of Vermont history are unknown to her own citizens. In reality the early history of our State is full of romantic incident and bold and successful adventure, and no Vermonter need blush as he reads its pages; and yet the leading incidents and the facts which specially tend to elevate early Vermont in the esteem of her children, are not generally and familiarly known to the men now in the midst of active life the peculiar character of her early pioneers, brave, robust, and determined men, although uncultivated; the struggles and toils of the first settlers; the imminent danger in which they stood, in the first place of being devoured entirely between the neighboring States, and then of being sacrificed by the Continental Confederacy from a fear of offending hungry enemies; the refusal of the Confederacy to receive her; and the magnanimity with which, in spite of their refusal, she buckled on her armor and contributed at Ticonderoga and Hubbardton and Bennington and Saratoga to the successful result of the Revolutionary struggle; the diplomatic skill with which a few uncultivated but shrewd and strong men contrived to delay upon her own borders, under various pretexts, a formidable hostile army during a whole campaign; the fact that in our own little State, long before the effort was made elsewhere to embody the governmental theories that underlaid the whole Revolutionary war, there was organized and put into practical operation the first Republican government that ever existed; and that other not less glorious fact, that supposing the doctrines of the Declaration really to mean exactly what they purported to signify, it was our own State that made the first practical application of the acknowledged right of all men to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, by making the first constitutional provision against the existence within her bounds of human slavery. Surely in this day of terrific struggle, when the Devil of political conservatism seems wrestling with the Angel of the Lord, and Liberty stands silently but hopefully awaiting the result of the strife, surely it must stir the pride and elate the soul of every one of her sons to remember, that in Vermont was struck the first blow that severed the chains of the bondman,

by constitutional provision, and thus by the voice of the State bade the oppressed "go free," and that it was one of her early Judges who professed a willingness to yield control of a fugitive bondman, upon presentation of a "bill of sale from Almighty God."

The most singular fact that can be stated in connection with our public schools, is that while ostensibly and really established for the purpose of teaching our children how well to discharge the duties of their future citizenship, this particular subject is almost the only one in the whole range of scholastic attainment, that receives absolutely no attention whatever.

There can surely be no room for doubt in this matter. Freemen, in the true sense of the word, cannot happen like accidental fires, or grow like turnips. The play of Othello without any mention of the Moor himself, would be a monument of sagacity by the side of a republican school, organized expressly to impart all necessary qualifications to republican citizens, that should never teach even the simplest elements of the principles of republican institutions.

These grand fundamental principles should then be regularly taught in all our schools. The minds and hearts of our children should grow daily in constant familiarity with those moral and political principles that precede and underlie all possible republicanism.

Nor is this all. The State Bill of Rights, and the leading features of the State and National Constitutions, with a knowledge of the different departments of Government, both State and National, together with some acquaintance with the method of making and executing laws, should be topics of common conversation and particular instruction in every common school, to all the older pupils at least.

That these desirable changes may be accomplished, two things are necessary.

1st. That the general law of the State which prescribes the nature of the instruction that shall be given in the schools, should be so modified that special instruction shall be given in the Geography, History, Constitution and frame of political government of our own State.

2nd. That having secured such change of law, or rather such an enactment, then public sentiment should take the matter earnestly in hand and insure the full execution of the law.

## TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS.

I feel constrained to express my official obligations to the Town Superintendents of schools, for the prompt and faithful manner in which they have responded to all the official requirements I have made upon them under the law. To this there have been a few, and but a few exceptions. And I must be allowed to say, that the State is under a far greater weight of obligation than is commonly supposed to the Superintendents, as a body, for the degree of thoroughness with which they have in most cases discharged what, when well done, must be a very onerous duty.

The character of the supervision of our schools by the Superintendents, has been improving in each year since my own connection with the work. This has been owing partly to the change of law, which, making the Superintendents State Agents, rather than town officials for each locality, although still as before elected by the towns, would naturally, as it really has, elevate the character of the office, and secure, as a general thing, a better class of men; and partly to the increased interest in the schools which has necessarily resulted from the regular and repeated discussions of educational interests that have grown out of the organization of your Honorable Board, with its Institutes and regular educational meetings. This increase of general interest has in this direction, as it does in every other case, elicited from the town officials a more hearty and systematic discharge of official duties, and so has enured to the direct advantage of the schools.

The wonder indeed is, not that while having men elected in every town for the special purpose of supervising our schools, we have still suffered under the infliction of so many indifferent, or positively bad schools, but that under all the circumstances of sometimes indifference and many times of actual hostility to any supervision whatever, we should have had no worse schools.

While it may be frankly admitted that occasionally an unfaithful man may have assumed an office, the duties of which he was unable to discharge, or was willing to neglect; still these cases have been rare, not happening any more frequently than have occurred instances in which towns have, with purpose aforethought, to render nugatory a State law, elected to office men who were hostile themselves to the execution of any supervisory laws; or have instructed the Superintendent elect to neglect his legal duty; or have refused, when the subject was under the control of the town, to grant any compensation for services rendered; or have, as in one case within my own knowledge, elected a man to the office who could neither read nor write his own name; or in another, have, for the purpose of ridiculing all supervision, elected a town pauper.

As the general mind becomes more and more interested in the success of any practical operation whatever, it never fails to demand, and seldom fails to receive more faithfulness from all whom it employs as operators. This is a general rule, and it applies in educational, as in all other ordinary matters.

From my official connection with the schools, necessarily cognizant with the subject to a greater degree than any other person can be, I look upon the Town Superintendents of Schools, as a class, as second to no other class of official men in the State. for earnest faithfulness and devotion to their duties. And the services of these men have been of incalculable value, and have added immensely to the efficiency of our schools.

After the system of supervision of schools by State and County Superintendents was allowed to die, there was a long period during which the school interests of the State were much neglected, and in many localities had measurably passed out of the general mind; and during these "dark ages" of the common schools, the office of Superintendent sank into *disrepute* and became a standing joke, like that of hog hayward. Influ-

ential men in active political or business life would not accept the office, and in many towns in the State, no one but the clergyman would consent to receive an election. It is to the unselfish devotion of the true friends of education, in those gloomy days, who were mainly clergymen, that the State owes the preservation of her school system; they did what lay within their power to keep alive the few embers of interest not entirely quenched in the ashes of general apathy, and thus accomplished much good. And what was then true, is no less so now. In all my efforts and labors, in all sections of the State, I have found the truest, firmest and wisest friends of popular education, in the ranks of the clergymen of all the various denominations.

A good deal of discussion has been stirred in regard to the compensation which by law is given to Superintendents, and many whose ingenuity has been painfully racked to find ostensible cause of complaint against the operation of the school system, derive a special pleasure from reference to the gross amount of nearly $5,000 that is annually paid for supervision of the schools. And this view has been aggravated by the following paragraph, which appeared in the Annual Report of the State Auditor for the year 1861:

"The item of expenses for School Superintendents is rapidly increasing. The law "defining the duties and fixing the per diem compensation of School Superintendents "was passed in 1858; in 1859 their accounts for services amounted to $422.25; in "1860 the amount of their accounts had increased to $4,615.05, and for the year just "ended $5,008.61. I am unable to find any just cause for this increase."

The mystery alluded to above is not exactly inscrutable. The law of 1858 took effect from its passage, and was approved November 23, 1858. But the Superintendents' year, identical with the school year, began April 1, 1858, and ended March 31, 1859; and the great bulk of their labors was performed before the law took effect, leaving only a small portion of their compensation to come from the State Treasury under the law, and many towns paid the compensation for the whole year, thus further diminishing the amount actually paid by the State. Thus the "increase" that seems to have alarmed the Auditor, is accounted for.

But I have more difficulty in trying to "find any just cause" for the appearance of the above paragraph in the Auditor's Report, because, several weeks before the Report of the Auditor was printed, he having in conversation with me intimated surprise at the unaccountable increase of the account for Superintendents' services, I fully explained the matter to him personally, so that he expressed entire satisfaction. It is to be regretted, that under these circumstances, the paragraph should have appeared, for it created unnecessary and undeserved hostility to the school interests of the State.

It may be well to examine this topic of compensation to Superintendents a little. I have no means, until the appearance of the Auditor's Report, of ascertaining the exact amount that is actually paid to these officers in the financial year immediately preceding the appearance of my own Report, but I require of Superintendents each year a statement of the amount of compensation that is *claimed* by them, this amount being likely to be diminished somewhat upon being audited.

The amount thus claimed as reported to me in April, 1861, and contained in the last Annual Report, was $5,323, while the amount claimed as reported in April, 1862, and contained in the present Report, is $4,844, showing a diminution in the amount of compensation as claimed of $479 for the last school year.

In considering the gross sum paid in any year, it is to be recollected that the large number of districts in the State makes a great amount of labor necessary in even an ordinarily faithful supervision of the schools. And when we reflect upon the number of children and of districts, and the vast expenditure made in support of the schools, the aggregate amount paid for the great amount of labor made necessary by law, is not extravagant. Then this expenditure is as effectually guarded as can be accomplished by law. The legal compensation is one dollar per day, and every Superintendent's account is required to be verified by oath.

When we compare this rate of compensation, taken in connection with the importance of the work to be done, with the rate of compensation in other connections, it is proved to be at least not unreasonably large. Jurors receive $1.25 per day and travel; witnesses in County Court $1 and travel; Guardians and Executors and Administrators, about $1.50 to $2, &c., &c.

Then, as appears in the last Report, the aggregate expense of school supervision in this State, is much smaller than in our neighboring States—the average compensation last year was, in Vermont, $22.08; in New-Hampshire $37.05, and the disparity between our State and Massachusetts was still greater.

Some degree of hostility to Superintendents has grown out of an erroneous impression prevalent in some portions of the State, as to the effect of the modification of law by which power to revoke certificates under certain circumstances, was given to Superintendents. Many have supposed that this grant of special power, under certain conditions, operated to divest Prudential Committees of all power to discharge teachers whatever.

I apprehend this opinion to be entirely erroneous. The grant of power to revoke certificates, was asked and bestowed simply to protect the interests of districts where Prudential Committees, from obstinacy or evil design, persistently refused to remove teachers who were notoriously incompetent or improper persons to stand in that relation to the children of the schools. And the power given is exceedingly limited and hampered by so many restraints as to avoid all danger from its exercise in most cases. No revocation of any certificate can occur, except for certain causes, specifically mentioned, and no Superintendent can legally transcend the precise limits assigned for the exercise of this power.

The grant of concurrent power to Superintendents in special cases, can in no way at all affect the power hitherto, and now as well, existing in and pertaining to the office of Prudential Committee. Neither does the possession of the certificate of a Superintendent, shield any teacher from removal by the Prudential Committee *for just cause*. The power of Prudential Committees remains as it has stood for years. Now as before, *he removes* a teacher at his peril; if he can show good cause he will *be justified, if he* cannot show good cause he will be mulcted in damages.

I regret that the number of Reports of Superintendents to the town, that are reported to have been printed, has not increased. A thorough and searching report to the town by an upright and earnest Superintendent is a very efficient means of improving the schools. There are instances where a single report, truthfully setting forth the actual condition of the schools, and faithfully assigning the real causes of their deficiencies, has revolutionized the public sentiment of a town, and produced very great improvement in the schools.

A general adoption of the custom now prevalent in a few of the more enterprising towns, of printing the report of the Town Superintendent, in connection with those of the Selectmen, Overseers and Treasurer, and distributing them on the morning of March meeting, would be productive of great good to all the permanent interests of the people.

## COMPENSATION TO DISTRICT CLERKS FOR STATISTICAL RETURNS.

As the only reliable basis of legislation for schools, the statistics in reference to the condition and wants of our schools are of the utmost consequence. From the very circumstances of the case, the statistics must come to the public through the Superintendents from the teachers and District Clerks. As the law makes the collection of all necessary facts a part, and a very important part, of the daily duties of the teacher, the duty may be performed within the time, and may be deemed to be included within the scope of duties, for which the wages of the teacher are considered due compensation.

But upon the District Clerks, the law has imposed duties which are additional to the ordinary duties appertaining to the office; and as these duties are somewhat laborious and equally important, there would seem to be a propriety in giving them by specific enactment, legal power to claim and collect of the District a fair and reasonable compensation therefor.

## SENDING NON-RESIDENT CHILDREN TO SCHOOL.

In the correspondence that has grown up in connection with the other duties required by law of the Secretary, one or two questions are often asked, and on this account and on account of their own importance, they may perhaps be answered here.

Have children any right to attend the schools of Districts in which they do not reside? and if so, do they draw public money? and if so, where?

I suppose there cannot be much doubt in regard to the first question, although no express permission is by law given, that I know, to children to attend any other than the schools of their own district. But in the legislation with regard to graded schools, there is a provision that "children not residing in such district shall not be permitted to attend "the higher schools of such district, except with the consent of the Pru- "dential Committee, who may prescribe the terms upon which they may "be admitted."

In the absence of any legislation upon this point, as far as common schools are concerned, it would perhaps be safe to infer that a similar rule would apply, and that children, with the consent of the Prudential Committee, and on payment of a reasonable tuition, may be permitted to attend schools in districts in which they are not resident.

But the intention of the law beyond a doubt is, that each locality shall be required to sustain sufficient schools for the education of its own children; and there would be manifest injustice in permitting children of non-paying citizens to trench in the least upon the educational opportunities of the children of those who by their taxes sustain the school.

And, indeed, there had grown up in the State a custom that was exceedingly unfair and injurious. In 1861, there were reported to be 122 districts that had been without any school for the whole year, and 40 districts in which minorities had been deprived of all school privileges by votes of majorities. Men who could descend to voting that the children of the district should have no opportunity in school for even the rudiments of an education, would only have to ascend, to reach the meanness, after having disfranchised their neighbors whose poverty precluded them from sending their children to a distance, of sending their own children to some neighboring district whose Prudential Committee being a relative or friend would charge nothing for the privilege, and thus wink at an act of the pettiest of all larcenies.

These things actually did occur, in a multitude of instances; and under the old distribution of the public money, children thus attending were counted and all grumbling was silenced.

But it was one of the special objects of the new distribution of the public money, to put an end to this practice. Hence it is provided that a certain portion shall go to the districts equally, and the balance shall be distributed in proportion to the average attendance of *the children of the district upon the schools of the district.* And this provision effectually prevents the continuance of this practice, for children of any district must attend the schools of the same district in order to affect in any way the distribution of the public money; in other words, children who attend the schools of districts in which they do not reside will not draw public money anywhere. All hardship is avoided; for, if necessary or convenient, children having no facilities at home, may attend the schools of the districts either by paying the Prudential Committee a reasonable tuition, or by boarding in the district whose school they would attend, and thus becoming resident therein.

## COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE UPON SCHOOL.

Annually in the official returns of the Superintendents and in the official correspondence of this office, the question is propounded, "Can "we not have a law by which children can be compelled to attend the schools?" That truant children in the streets, may be arrested as nuisances and cared for in Houses of Correction or Reformatory Schools, as a matter of police regulation, the practice of all large cities would seem to establish.

But very grave doubts may be entertained whether the State or any town in this State has power, as a mere educational measure, to compel the attendance of any man's children upon the schools. It is very doubtful whether the effect of such an attempt would be beneficial. But without doubt the same end may be compassed indirectly by prescribing, after the lapse of a certain fixed time, certain mental and moral attainments as pre-requisite qualifications for admission to the rights of citizenship.

There is afloat much careless talk about the power of municipalities and States to enforce this and compel that, as in reference to our schools, to compel children to study particular branches, or particular books, which will hardly bear the test of close examination. It is well even in these days, to remember that the habit of assuming too little is not the besetting sin of even republican governments.

## POWER TO DECIDE SCHOOL QUESTIONS.

In direct connection with what I have said of the multitude of questions in reference to the administration of the school law, and which naturally enough appear in my official correspondence, although no legal sanction whatever can attach to any replies that can be made, is another topic deserving of mention.

It is made a portion of my official duties to communicate such information in regard to systems of instruction in other States as may seem proper, and I feel warranted in calling attention to a provision of the New York school system, that was found there to work admirably.

All difficulties and all questions that arose between teacher and pupil or parent, between individuals or individuals and districts, were referred in the first instance to a State Judicial officer, and by him decided, subject to an appeal to the higher courts.

Difficulties are and will be constantly arising in regard to the true construction and application of our school laws, and these difficulties and misunderstandings when they terminate in law suits, are among the most embittered and expensive suits known to the Courts, and almost without exception leave a spirit of animosity and bitterness that is fatal to the welfare of the schools.

I beg leave, therefore, to suggest to your Honorable Board, that consideration be had, whether it be not advisable, at some not remote period, to recommend to the Legislature to designate some one of the Judges, or appoint some one expressly, who shall take cognizance directly of all disputes and difficulties growing out of the administration of the school law, and determine the same, with an appeal to the Supreme Court.

It may be well expected that some such arrangement, saving the expensive and protracted litigation in our County Courts that is productive of so much evil of various kinds, would accomplish much good.

## EXISTING SCHOOL LAWS.

The opposition and disturbance that naturally enough arose out of the enactment of laws which powerfully affected the interests of education, and incidentally conflicted with the peculiar notions and private interests

of various classes of men, has almost entirely died out. The public mind seems to have settled into a comparative quietude upon one or two points that were much discussed for many months after the passage of the School Bill.

Within the last year I have scarcely known, either in my correspondence, or in my personal visitation of the State, of any hostility being expressed as to the authentic list of books, the authorization of which gave rise to a good deal of agitation at the time. The effect of the selection and adoption of an authentic list of books has been so precisely what was predicted for it in the Report that contained the list, that almost every one has been disappointed. It may be safely said that the effect of the law has been very generally satisfactory in all parts of the State.

A similar effort has been often made in other States, and failed from very apparent causes, and within the last two years I have received various applications from other States, requesting an abstract of the laws, and a description of the method of selection. And in the last Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Maine, the law of this State, in regard to books, is quoted with commendation and recommended for adoption.

The rather angry discussion that existed for a time in our State in reference to the use of the Bible in schools, seems to have quieted down almost entirely. Little has been heard upon this topic since the last Annual Report, and hopes are entertained that that Report was entirely satisfactory. It is interesting in this connection, to note that the stringent law of Massachusetts, requiring the Bible to be read in every school at each session, after being essentially modified in its bearing by the official construction put upon it by the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board in his instructions to Committees, was at the last session of the Massachusetts Legislature so modified as to assume exactly the position taken by your Honorable Board upon this question, requiring the Scriptures to be daily read in the schools, but expressly relieving the children of parents who conscientiously object, from any compulsory participation

## MODIFICATIONS OF LAW.

Various modifications of law whose effects would probably be beneficial, might easily be mentioned, but I am disposed to suggest only two at the present time.

1st. I recommend that by special enactment it be required in all the common schools of the Stase, that special instruction be given in the Geography and History, Constitution and principles of government, of the State of Vermont.

2nd. I recommend that District Clerks be empowered by law to charge the districts and receive a reasonable compensation, for the discharge of the duties required of them by law in the collection of statistics.

## PRACTICAL MEANS OF IMPROVING OUR SCHOOLS.

Before closing the Report, it may be well to recall and array before us the ordinary and usual means of adding to the efficiency of our schools, for it is upon common and practical measures that we must mainly rely. Legislation may do much for popular education, but it is chiefly by empowering the friends of education to use effectually certain means of improvement which are already in our possession. And the aid of Legislation must from time to time be invoked, as practical deficiencies in the working of our laws develope themselves. So long as the education of the children of the State is the most important and the most difficult task for the commonwealth to perform, and so long as its effectual performance involves an expenditure of money larger than all other State expenditures taken together, so long it will be idle to suppose that the legislative wisdom of the State at any one particular time will be sufficient for all future time, in the case of schools any more than in the case of banks, rail roads or poor laws.

What means have we then that we may, under existing laws, easily put in operation for the benefit of our schools?

1st. We may fully attend the district school meetings, and thus give the benefit of the collected wisdom, sagacity and rectitude of the community, to the discussion of educational measures to be adopted for the improvement of our own school.

2nd. We may all agree to send our own children to the public and common school. If we do this we shall much plainer than ever before see a broad distinction between good and bad schools.

We shall then demand for our own children the very best instruction that reasonably lies within the means of the district, affirming that the best possible instruction is not too good for the children that we love; and when taking one step farther we shall perceive and admit, that a school which is just good enough for our own children is not one jot too good for the little fatherless and neglected wanderer in the street.

3d. We will elect to the offices of the district, the best and most able and faithful men of the district, and when ourselves elected will discharge our duties in earnest good faith.

4th. We will see to it, that the man who is elected Town Superintendent should be a man of the highest and purest character, competent, willing and determined faithfully to discharge his whole duty, and when elected, we will sustain him fully in all well doing.

5th. We will attend the public examinations of teachers, and encourage the superintendent to do his whole duty, thus giving power and efficacy to an enactment of law, that alone, if thoroughly enforced, would double at least the usefulness of our schools. Let public opinion add force to the law, and cause the examination of teachers to become what it ought, and the race of incompetent and inefficient and unworthy teachers will become extinct.

of various classes of men, has almost entirely died out. The public mind seems to have settled into a comparative quietude upon one or two points that were much discussed for many months after the passage of the School Bill.

Within the last year I have scarcely known, either in my correspondence, or in my personal visitation of the State, of any hostility being expressed as to the authentic list of books, the authorization of which gave rise to a good deal of agitation at the time. The effect of the selection and adoption of an authentic list of books has been so precisely what was predicted for it in the Report that contained the list, that almost every one has been disappointed. It may be safely said that the effect of the law has been very generally satisfactory in all parts of the State.

A similar effort has been often made in other States, and failed from very apparent causes, and within the last two years I have received various applications from other States, requesting an abstract of the laws, and a description of the method of selection. And in the last Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Maine, the law of this State, in regard to books, is quoted with commendation and recommended for adoption.

The rather angry discussion that existed for a time in our State in reference to the use of the Bible in schools, seems to have quieted down almost entirely. Little has been heard upon this topic since the last Annual Report, and hopes are entertained that that Report was entirely satisfactory. It is interesting in this connection, to note that the stringent law of Massachusetts, requiring the Bible to be read in every school at each session, after being essentially modified in its bearing by the official construction put upon it by the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board in his instructions to Committees, was at the last session of the Massachusetts Legislature so modified as to assume exactly the position taken by your Honorable Board upon this question, requiring the Scriptures to be daily read in the schools, but expressly relieving the children of parents who conscientiously object, from any compulsory participation

## MODIFICATIONS OF LAW.

Various modifications of law whose effects would probably be beneficial, might easily be mentioned, but I am disposed to suggest only two at the present time.

1st. I recommend that by special enactment it be required in all the common schools of the Stase, that special instruction be given in the Geography and History, Constitution and principles of government, of the State of Vermont.

2nd. I recommend that District Clerks be empowered by law to charge the districts and receive a reasonable compensation, for the discharge of the duties required of them by law in the collection of statistics,

## PRACTICAL MEANS OF IMPROVING OUR SCHOOLS.

Before closing the Report, it may be well to recall and array before us the ordinary and usual means of adding to the efficiency of our schools, for it is upon common and practical measures that we must mainly rely. Legislation may do much for popular education, but it is chiefly by empowering the friends of education to use effectually certain means of improvement which are already in our possession. And the aid of Legislation must from time to time be invoked, as practical deficiencies in the working of our laws develope themselves. So long as the education of the children of the State is the most important and the most difficult task for the commonwealth to perform, and so long as its effectual performance involves an expenditure of money larger than all other State expenditures taken together, so long it will be idle to suppose that the legislative wisdom of the State at any one particular time will be sufficient for all future time, in the case of schools any more than in the case of banks, rail roads or poor laws.

What means have we then that we may, under existing laws, easily put in operation for the benefit of our schools?

1st. We may fully attend the district school meetings, and thus give the benefit of the collected wisdom, sagacity and rectitude of the community, to the discussion of educational measures to be adopted for the improvement of our own school.

2nd. We may all agree to send our own children to the public and common school. If we do this we shall much plainer than ever before see a broad distinction between good and bad schools.

We shall then demand for our own children the very best instruction that reasonably lies within the means of the district, affirming that the best possible instruction is not too good for the children that we love; and when taking one step farther we shall perceive and admit, that a school which is just good enough for our own children is not one jot too good for the little fatherless and neglected wanderer in the street.

3d. We will elect to the offices of the district, the best and most able and faithful men of the district, and when ourselves elected will discharge our duties in earnest good faith.

4th. We will see to it, that the man who is elected Town Superintendent should be a man of the highest and purest character, competent, willing and determined faithfully to discharge his whole duty, and when elected, we will sustain him fully in all well doing.

5th. We will attend the public examinations of teachers, and encourage the superintendent to do his whole duty, thus giving power and efficacy to an enactment of law, that alone, if thoroughly enforced, would double at least the usefulness of our schools. Let public opinion add force to the law, and cause the examination of teachers to become what it ought, and the race of incompetent and inefficient and unworthy teachers will become extinct.

6th. Having a teacher selected, we will make him the friend rather than the hireling of the district. Plainly but kindly reminding him of his responsibilities, and demanding of him an effort at self-culture that shall each day make him better qualified for his daily duties, we will provide for him in the best house in the district, a quiet, well warmed and well lit room, where he can possibly find time and opportunity for self improvement.

7th. We will insure the comfort and health of pupils and teachers by reconstruction or repair of the schoolhouse, by an abundant supply of good fuel, and all the means and appliances of maps, globes, black-boards and those books and simple articles of apparatus that are within the reach of every district.

8th. We will disuse ourselves and discourage in others that prevalent spirit of carping and fault-finding, that has worked everywhere so much of evil to all our schools, and endeavor to surround the teacher with an atmosphere of kindly friendship that will elicit from him the exercise of his utmost ability in behalf of our children.

9th. We will visit the schools as opportunity offers, to give kind looks and perhaps kind words for the encouragement of the teacher and the inspiration of the scholars. No single instrumentality can be made to accomplish so much of good for our schools, as these regular and faithful visitations by intelligent parents and citizens.

The multitude of topics that continually present themselves, demanding discussion in the Annual Report, make a selection from among these, always a matter of great difficulty. Such as seemed most to deserve presentation at this time I have dwelt upon, and now am constrained to leave untouched many points of great interest.

Abundant reasons for gratitude for the past and for hopefulness in the future, are apparent from the Report. In a year of unprecedented public trial and private embarrassment, the statistics, with the official returns of the local superintendents and the report of my observations, show a surprising state of prosperity in all school matters. In the midst of so many unfavorable circumstances we find a larger attendance upon the schools, a larger attendance upon the Institutes, an increase of expenditure for school houses, an improvement in the qualification of the teachers, an increase of success attending their schools and a general increase of interest in the welfare of our schools.

We ought then to take courage, and still strive on in the cause of popular education.

Our country in this the day of her sorest necessity has duties for all her citizens, and while he who perils his life for her on the red field of battle may well occupy the front rank among her children, his place is not far behind, who in the quiet of her glens, is joining hands with his neighbors in protecting and fostering the common schools, which are the very fountain sources of republican strength and growth.

Respectfully submitted,

J. S. ADAMS, *Secretary.*

# APPENDIX.

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION ON THE SUBJECT OF SCHOOLHOUSES, SUPPLEMENTARY TO HIS FIRST ANNUAL REPORT.

HON. MYRON LAWRENCE, *President of the Senate :*

SIR :—I have the honor herewith to transmit to you, for the information of the Legislature, a Supplementary Report from the Secretary of the Board of Education on the subject of Schoolhouses.

I am, Sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

EDWARD EVERETT.

*Council Chamber, 29th March,* 1838.

### REPORT.

TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION :

Gentlemen :—In the Report which I lately submitted to you on the subject of our "Common Schools and other means of popular education," I mentioned schoolhouse architecture, as one of the cardinal points in the system, and I reserved the consideration of that topic for a special communication.

In my late tour of exploration, made into every county in the State, I personally examined or obtained exact and specific information, regarding the relative size, construction, and condition of about eight hundred schoolhouses; and, in various ways—principally by correspondence—I have obtained general information respecting, at least, a thousand more.

As long ago as 1832, it was said by the Board of Censors of the American Institute of Instruction, that "if we were called upon to name the most prominent defect in the schools of our country,—that which contributes most, directly and indirectly, to retard the progress of public education, and which most loudly calls for a prompt and thorough reform, it would be the want of spacious and convenient schoolhouses." As a general fact, I do not think the common, district, schoolhouses are better now, than when the above remark was written; I have, therefore, thought that I could, at this time, in no other way, more efficiently subserve the interests of the cause in which we are engaged, than in bringing together and presenting under one view, the most essential points respecting the structure and location, of a class of buildings, which may be said to constitute the household of education.

I do not propose to describe a perfect model, and to urge a universal conformity. It is obvious, that some difference in construction is necessary, according to the different kind of school to be kept. In each case, it must be considered, whether the school-room be that of an academy or of an infant school; whether it be in the city or in the country; for males or for females, or both; whether designed to accommodate many scholars or only a few; or whether the range of studies to be pursued is extensive, or elementary only. The essentials being understood, the plan can be modified for adaptation to each particular case.

The schoolhouses in the State have a few common characteristics. They are almost universally contracted in size; they are situated immediately on the road-side, and are without any proper means of ventilation. In most other respects, the greatest diversity prevails. The floors of some are horizontal; those of others rise in the form of an amphitheatre, on two, or sometimes on three sides, from an open area in the centre. On the horizontal floors, the seats and desks are sometimes designed only for a single scholar; allowing the teacher room to approach on either side, and giving an opportunity to go out or into the seat, without disturbance of any one. In others, ten scholars are seated on one seat, and at one desk, so that the middle ones can neither go out nor in without disturbing, at least, four of their neighbors. In others, again, long tables are prepared, at which the scholars sit face to face, like large companies at dinner. In others, the seats are arranged on the sides of the room, the walls of the house forming the backs of the seats, and the scholars, as they sit at the desks, facing inwards; while in others, the desks are attached to the walls, and the scholars face outwards. The form of schoolhouses is, with very few exceptions, that of a square or oblong. Some, however, are round, with an open circular area in the center of the room, for the teacher's desk and a stove, with seats and desks around the wall, facing outwards, separated from each other by high partitions, which project some distance into the room, so that the scholars may be turned into these separate compartments, as into so many separate stalls. In no particular does chance seem to have had so much sway as in regard to light. In many, so much of the walls is occupied by windows, that there is but little difference between the intensity and the changes of light within and without the schoolroom; while in some others, there is but one small window on each of the three sides of the house and none on the fourth. Without specifying further particulars, however, it seems clear that some plan may be devised, combining the substantial advantages and avoiding the principal defects of all.

In the Report above referred to, it was observed that "when it is considered, that more than five-sixths of all the children in the State spend a considerable portion of the most impressible period of their lives in the schoolhouse, the general condition of those buildings and their influences upon the young stand forth, at once, as topics of prominence and magnitude. The construction of schoolhouses connects itself closely with the love of study, with proficiency, health, anatomical formation, and length of life. These are great interests and therefore suggest great duties. It is believed, that in some important particulars, their structure can be improved, without the slightest additional expense; and that, in other respects, a small advance in cost would be returned a thousand fold in the improvement of those habits, tastes, and sentiments of our children, which are so soon to be developed into public manners, institutions, and laws, and to become unchangeable history."

The subject of schoolhouse architecture will be best considered under distinct heads.

## VENTILATION AND WARMING.

Ventilation and warming are considered together, because they may be easily made to co-operate with each other in the production of health and comfort. It seems generally to have been forgotten, that a room, designed to accommodate fifty, one hundred, and in some cases, two hundred persons, should be differently constructed from one, intended for a common family of eight or ten only. In no other particular is this difference so essential as in regard to ventilation. There is no such immediate, indispensable necessary of life, as fresh air. A man may live for days, endure great hardships, and even perform great labors, without food, without drink, or without sleep; but deprive him of air for only one minute, and all power of thought is extinct; he becomes as incapable of any intellectual operation as a dead man, and in a few minutes more, he is gone beyond resuscitation. Nor is this all;—but just in proportion as the stimulus of air is withheld, the whole system loses vigor. As the machinery in a water-mill slackens when the head of water is drawn down; as a locomotive loses speed if the fire be not seasonably replenished: just so do muscle, nerve and faculty faint and expire, if a sufficiency of vital air be not supplied to the lungs. As this Report is designed to produce actual results for the benefit of our children; and as it is said to be characteristic of our people, that they cannot be roused to action, until they see the reason for it, nor restrained from action when they do, I shall proceed to state the facts, whether popular or scientific, which bear upon this important subject.

The common, or atmospheric air, consists, mainly, of two ingredients, one only of which is endued by the Creator with the power of sustaining animal life. The same part of the air supports life and sustains combustion, so that in wells or cellars, where a candle will go out, a man will die. The vital ingredient, which is called *oxygen*, con-

stitutes only about twenty-one parts in a hundred of the air. The other principal ingredient, called *azote*, will not sustain life. This proportion is adapted, by omniscient wisdom, with perfect exactness, to the necessities of the world. Were there any material diminution of the oxygen, other things remaing the same, every breathing thing would languish, and waste, and perish. Were there much more of it, it would stimulate the system, accelerating every bodily and mental operation, so that the most vigorous man would wear out in a few weeks or days. This will be readily understood, by all who have witnessed the effects of breathing exhilarating gas, which is nothing but this oxygen or vital portion of the air, sorted out and existing in a pure state. Besides, this oxygen is the supporter of combustion, and, were its quantity greatly increased, fire would hardly be extinguishable, even by water But the vital and the non-vital parts of the air are wisely mingled in the exact proportions best fitted for human utility and enjoyment; and all our duty is not to disturb these proportions. About four parts of the twenty-one of vital air are destroyed at every breath; so that, if one were to breathe the same air four or five times over, he would substantially exhaust the life-giving principle in it, and his bodily functions would convulse for a moment, and then stop. As the blood and the air meet each other in the lungs, not only is a part of the vital air destroyed, but a poisonous ingredient is generated. This poison constitutes about three parts in a hundred of the breath thrown out from the lungs. Nor is it a weak, slow poison, but one of fatal virulence and sudden action. If the poisonous parts be not regularly removed, (and they can be removed only by inhaling fresh air,) the blood absorbs them, and carries them back into the system. Just according to the quantity of poison, forced back into the blood, follow the consequences of lassitude, faintness, or death. The poisonous parts are called carbonic acid. They are heavier than the common air, and as the lungs throw them out at the lips, their tendency is to fall towards the ground or the floor of a room, and if there were no currents of the air, they would do so. But the other parts of the air, being warmed in the lungs and rarified, are lighter than the common air, and the moment they pass from the lips, their tendency is to rise upward towards the sky. Were these different portions of the air as they come from the lungs, of different colors, we should, if in a perfectly still atmosphere, see the stream divided, part of it falling and part ascending. A circulation of the air, however, produced, out-of-doors by differences of temperature, and in our apartments by the motion of their occupants and by other causes, keeps the poisonous parts of the air, to some extent, mingled with the rest of it, and creates the necessity of occasionally changing the whole. Though the different portions of the air have the same color to the bodily eye, yet in the eye of reason their qualities are diametrically opposite.

Although there is but the slightest interval between one act of breathing and another, yet, in a natural state of things, before we can draw a second breath, the air of the first is far beyond our reach, and never returns, until it has gone the circuit of nature and been renovated. Such are the silent and sublime operations, going on day and night, without intermission, all round the globe, for all the myriads of breathing creatures that inhabit it without their notice or consciousness. But, perhaps some will suppose, that, in this way, the vital portion of the air, in process of time, will be wholly consumed for used up; or that the poisonous portion, thrown off from the lungs, will settle and accumulate, upon the earth's surface, and rise around us, like a flood of water, so high as eventually to flow back into the lungs and inflict death. All this may be done; not however in the course of nature, but only by suicidal or murderous contrivances. In the Black Hole of Calcutta, in the year 1756, one hundred and forty-six persons were confined to a room only eighteen feet square for ten hours; and although there was one aperture for the admission of air and light, one hundred and twenty-three had perished at the end of that time. Only twenty-three survived, and several of these were immediately seized with typhus fever. In the Dublin Hospital, during the four years preceding 1785, out of seven thousand six hundred and fifty children, two thousand nine hundred and forty-four died, within a fortnight after their birth; that is, thirty-eight out of every hundred. The cause of this almost unexampled mortality was suspected by Dr. Clarke, the physician, who caused fresh air to be introduced by means of pipes, and during three following years, the deaths were only one hundred and sixty-five out of four thousand two hundred and forty-three, or less than four in a hundred; that is, a diminution in the proportion of deaths of more than thirty-four per cent. Hence it appears, that, through a deficiency of pure air, in one hospital, during the space of four years, there perished more than twenty-six hundred children. In Naples, Italy, there is a grotto, where carbonic acid issues from the earth and flows along the bottom in a shallow stream. Dogs are kept by the guides who conduct travellers to see this natural curiosity, and, for a small fee, they thrust the noses of the dogs *into the gas*. The consequence is, that the dogs are immediately

seized with convulsions, and, if not released, they die in five minutes. But let us not cry, *Shame!* too soon on those who are guilty of this sordidness and cruelty. We are repeating every day, though in rather a milder fashion, the same experiment, except that we use children instead of dogs.

But why, in process of time, it may still be asked, is not the vital principle of the air wholly exhausted, and the valleys and plains of the earth, at least, filled with the fatal one? Again, Divine Wisdom has met the exigency in a manner fitted to excite our admiration and wonder. The vegetable world requires for its growth the very substance which the animal world rejects as its death; and in its turn, all vegetable growth yields a portion of oxygen for the support of animal life. One flourishes upon that which is fatal to the other. Thus the equilibrium is for ever restored; or rather it is never disturbed. They exchange poison for aliment; death for life; and the elements of a healthful existence flow round in a circle for ever. The deadly poison thrown from the lungs of the inhabitants of our latitudes, in the depths of winter, is borne in the great circuit of the atmosphere to the tropical regions, and is there converted into vegetable growth; while the oxygen, exhaled in the processes of tropical vegetation, mounts the same car of the winds, and, in its appointed time, revisits the higher latitudes.* Why should we violently invade this beautiful arrangement of Providence?

There is another fact, impossible to be overlooked in considering this subject. Who can form any just conception of the quantity of air, which has been created? Science has demonstrated, that it is poured out between forty and fifty miles deep all round the globe. It was to prevent the necessity of our using it, *second-hand*, that it was given to us by sky-falls. Then, again, it is more liquid than water. It rushes into every nook and crevice, and fills every unoccupied place upon the earth's surface. All the powers of art fail in wholly excluding it from any given space. We cannot put our organs of breathing, where some of it will not reach them. All we can do is to corrupt it, so that none but fatal or noxious air shall reach them. This we do. Now if the air were a product of human pains-taking; if laborers sweated or slaves groaned to prepare it; if it were transported by human toil from clime to clime, like articles of export and import, between foreign countries, at a risk of property and life; if there were ever any dearth, or scarcity of it; if its whole mass could be monopolized, or were subject to accident or conquest, then, economy might be commendable. But ours is a parsimony of the inexhaustible. We are prodigals of health, of which we have so little, and niggards of air, of which we have so much. In the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, there are eight hundred feet cubic measure to each apartment, for one patient only. In the Prison at Charlestown, one hundred and seventy-one and a half cubic feet are allowed to each prisoner's cell. In addition to this, free ingress and egress of the air is allowed, by means of apertures and flues in the walls. In the Penitentiary, erected at Philadelphia a few years since, thirteen hundred cubic feet were allowed to each prisoner, solitarily confined; while in some of our school-rooms, less than forty cubic feet is allowed to a scholar, without any proper means of ventilation; and in one case, a school has been constantly kept, for thirteen years, in a room which allows less than thirty feet of air to the average number of scholars, now attending it; and even this schoolroom, contracted as it is, is besieged by such offensive effluvia, that the windows are scarcely opened, even in summer.

I know of but three causes, which can have led to these opprobrious results. In populous and crowded places, the price of land may have been thought to justify the use of small rooms for many scholars. But this can never have been even a pecuniary argument of any weight with a financial mind; for the ultimate public expense of the sickness and poverty engendered, would overbalance, a thousand fold, the requisite original outlay. Besides, even if there were limit and constraint horizontally, there can have been none perpendicularly.

A motive of some efficacy may have been felt in the increased expense of erecting a house of adequate size. This is a tangible motive. But how feeble is it, when compared with the health and comfort of children, their love of study, and their consequent proficiency in it! Should a case of necessity actually arise, where children were obliged to undergo some privation, far better would it be to stint them in their clothes, their food, or their fuel, than in their air. But in regard to schoolhouses which are built at the public expense, such a necessity never can occur. Besides, these considerations affect size only, not ventilation.

An economy of the air, which has once been warmed, is the only remaining motive for using foul air. But if the warm air is saved, the foul air must be breathed; for

* *See articles* A. and B. appended.

they are the same. For several years past, high ceilings have been strenuously recommended as a compromise of the difficulty. But when the room is high, it is necessary in the first place, to warm a much greater quantity of air, than is required for breathing, and when it has all been once breathed, it becomes as necessary to remove it and supply its place with pure air, as though the quantity had been small. Besides, pure air at a lower temperature will warm the human system more than impure air at a higher. In our climate, a moderately low ceiling is preferable to a high one, because, with such, a much larger portion of the air which we have been at the expense to heat, can be used.

But it is believed, that, in the vast majority of cases, this habitual use of foul air is not the result of calculation, but of oversight. And it is worthy of especial attention. that many of our schoolrooms, where the greatest privation of healthful air is now suffered, were constructed originally with a large open fireplace, which was of itself a sufficient ventilator; and that afterwards close stoves were introduced to overcome the coldness of the rooms, without any reflection, that what was gained in warmth and comfort, was lost in the purity of the atmosphere, and consequently in bodily health and mental vigor.

In regard to this most immediate of all the necessaries of life, that arrangement would be perfect, which should introduce the life-sustaining air, just as fast as it should be wanted for breathing; and, when breathed, should carry it off, not to be breathed again, until it should be renovated and purified in the laboratory of Nature. If one washes himself in running water, he will never dip up the same water a second time. So should it be with the air we respire. An arrangement, producing this effect, is perfectly practicable and easy. By examining a most valuable communication, placed at the end of this report, from Dr. Woodward, the Superintendent of the Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, it will appear, that fifty persons will consume the entire body of air in a room, thirty feet square and nine feet high, in about forty minutes. If, however, the room be perfectly tight, the air, once respired, will be partially mingled with the whole mass of air in the room, and will offer itself to be breathed again. What is wanted, therefore, is a current of fresh air flowing into the room, while a current of the respired air flows out of it; both to be equal to the quantity required for the occupants. Under such circumstances, if there be but little motion in the room, the poisonous part of the air will settle towards the floor as soon as it is cast from the lungs, while the other part of it, being raised almost to a blood heat in the lungs, will rise to the ceiling. In the ceiling therefore, should be an aperture for its escape. The carbonic acid will tend to flow out under the door or when it is opened. If the ceiling be concave or dome-shaped, only one aperture will be necessary;—if horizontal, and the room be large, several may be required. The number will depend upon the manner in which the room is heated. If the house be of one story only, the apertures will open into the attic. On the upper side of the aperture let a trap-door be hung, to be raised by a cord, running over a pulley, and coming down into the room, or, (which is more simple,) by wires, after the manner of house-bells. This door should be prevented from opening to a greater angle than eighty degrees, so that when the cord is loosened it will fall by its own weight and close the orifice. The door will be opened, more or less, according to the temperature of the weather and the degree of wind prevailing without, so as always to carry off the impure air just as fast as it is fouled by the lungs. Any person, by stepping into the open air and inhaling it for half a minute, can, on returning into the room, determine the state of the air within it. If the apertures through the ceiling open into the attic, the air can be let off, either through fan-windows at the ends, or through sky-lights; or an opening can be made into the chimney and a flue carried up to its top. In the last case, the floor of the attic, immediately under the flue, should be plastered, or covered with something incombustible, to make it perfectly secure against cinders, coming down through the flue. If the building be two stories high, the apertures for ventilation in the lower story, instead of being in the upper ceiling of the room, should be in the side walls, next the ceiling, and so ascend, by flues, through the walls of the second story until they open into the attic. Sliding dampers can be used, in order to open or close these lower orifices, so as to regulate the escape of air from the room. Where a schoolhouse two stories in height has been built in disregard of the laws of health and life, the lower room may be ventilated by making apertures in its upper ceiling, next to the walls of the room, and carrying up flues through the second story in tight boxes, attached to the walls and opening into the attic through similar apertures in the upper ceiling of the second story. These boxes will appear, in the second story, to be only casings of posts or pilasters, and will not materially disfigure the room.

The best apparatus for expelling foul air from a room consists in the proper means of introducing a supply of fresh warm air. Undoubtedly, the best mode of warming a room is to have a cellar under it, and to place a furnace in the cellar. Some place of storing wood seems indispensable for every schoolhouse, and a cellar could ordinarily be dug and stoned as cheaply as a wood-house could be built. I suppose, also, that a schoolhouse would be much less exposed to take fire from a furnace well set, than from a common fireplace or stove. But the great advantage of warming by a furnace is, that all parts of the room are kept at the same temperature. The air presses outward instead of inward, through every crack and crevice in door or window. No scholars are injured by being forced to sit in the vicinity of a stove or fireplace; nor is any part of the room encumbered by either. When the latter are used, many scholars, who sit in exposed situations, will spend half an hour a day, and often more, in going to the fire to warm themselves; and, in addition to those, whose comfort requires them to go, idlers, from all sides of the house, will make it a rendezvous or halfway place, for visiting. With an unequal diffusion of heat in a school warmed by a stove, or fireplace, I believe it is always true, that diligent scholars will stay in their seats and suffer, while the lazy will go to the fire to drone. Some other advantages of setting a furnace in a cellar to warm a school, are mentioned in the excellent communication of Dr. Woodward, above referred to. Feet can be warmed or dried at the orifices for admitting the heated air from a furnace as well as at a stove. There may be two of these orifices, one for the boys and one for the girls. The setting of a furnace requires some skill and science. We often meet with a prejudice against furnaces, which belongs not to the furnaces themselves, but to the ignorance of those who set them. There seems to be no objection, except it be that of appearance, against setting the furnace so high in the cellar, as that its brick or soapstone top shall be on a level with the floor of the room, and constitute a part of it.

If a common stove must be used for warming the room, then let it be enclosed in a case of sheet iron, rising from the floor on three sides of the stove and bending over it; not, however, so as to *close* over its top, but leaving an opening in the case, greater or less, according to the size of the stove and of the room. The sides of the case should be two or three inches from the sides of the stove. The stove should stand on legs a few inches from the floor, and fresh air should be introduced from out-of-doors and conducted under the stove in a tube or trough, which, as it rises around the stove, will be warmed and enter the room through the opening in the case at the top. A slide in the tube or trough will regulate the quantity of air to be admitted. The sensations, experienced in a room into which the external air is directly introduced and warmed in its passage, belong to a class entirely distinct from those engendered by air warmed in the ordinary way. They will be grateful to the pupils, and will promote elasticity and vigor of mind. It would be well to place the stove directly in the current of air caused by opening the door.

The common expedient of letting down windows from the top, so that the noxious air may escape, and the vacuum be filled with the pure, accomplishes the object in a very imperfect, and, at the same time, an objectionable manner. If there be any wind abroad, or, if there be a great difference in temperature, between the external air and the air of the room, the former rushes in with great violence and mingles with the heated and corrupted air, so that unless several room-fulls of air be admitted, a portion of that which has been rendered unfit for use, will still remain, while some that has been partially warmed will escape. But the greatest objection is, that the cold air drops like a shower-bath upon the scholars' heads;—a mode which all agree in pronouncing unhealthful, and sometimes dangerous.

Some schoolrooms are heated by a common close stove, the front part of which is placed in the wall, so that the door, where the stove is filled, is in an entry, while the body of the stove is in the schoolroom. It depends on other circumstances, whether this arrangement is beneficial or injurious. Where the air which keeps up the fire in the stove is taken from an entry, it passes through the funnel and chimney, and leaves the body of air in the room unchanged. This is no objection, provided the air in the room is changed otherwise. But if no other provision is made for changing the air in the room, the draught of the stove becomes important for that purpose. And although this may involve the evil of drawing in just as much air, through the crevices and openings, as is carried off through the stove, yet it is a less evil, than that of stagnant air in the room. If, however, the room is warmed by introducing a current of air from without, which is heated in its passage, then the arrangement of feeding the stove in an entry is unobjectionable, and may, often, be very commodious.

If the room be so warmed that the air presses from within, outwards, the doors *should* be hung so as to open inwards; if, on the other hand, the room be warmed by a

common stove or fireplace, the external air will press inwards, and therefore the doors should be hung so as to open outwards. Where the schoolroom has been so faultily constructed, that a current of air blows directly upon a row of scholars, every time the door is opened, the door should be re-hung, or have a spring to prevent its being left open.

A thermometer should be kept in every schoolroom, and hung on the coolest side of it. The proper temperature should be determined by unchangeable laws; not by the variable feelings or caprice of any individual. Without a thermometer,—if the teacher be habituated to live in the open air; if he be healthy, vigorous, and young; if he walk a mile or several miles to school; and especially, if he keep upon his feet during school hours;—the scholars will be drilled and scolded into a resignation to great suffering from cold. If, on the other hand, the teacher lead a sedentary life; if his health be feeble; if he step into the schoolroom from a neighboring door, he will, perhaps unconsciously, create an artificial summer about himself, and subject the children to a perilous transition in temperature, whenever they leave his tropical regions. In this way, a child's lungs may get a wound in early life, which neither Cuba nor the South of France can ever afterwards heal. A selfish or inconsiderate master will burn a whole room-full of children during the chill, and freeze them during the fever, of his own ague-fits. They must parch or congeal, as he shivers or glows.

If should be remembered, also, that even the thermometer ceases to be a guide, except in pure air. When pure air enters the lungs it evolves heat. Its oxygen carries on the process, (supposed to be combustion,) necessary for that purpose. This keeps our bodies warm. It is the reason why the blood remains regularly at a temperature of ninety-eight degrees, though the air by which we are surrounded rises to that heat but few times in a year. The air constantly supplies to the body, through the medium of the lungs, the heat which it is constantly abstracting by contact with its surface. But it is only through the agency of the oxygen, or life-sustaining portion of the air, that this heat is supplied. A thermometer, however, is insensible to this difference. It will indicate the same degree of heat in azote, i. e., in that portion of the air which will not sustain life, as in oxygen; although a man immersed in azote at seventy or eighty degrees would die of cold, if he did not of suffocation. I reiterate the first position, therefore, that even a thermometer ceases to be a guide, except in pure air.

Ordinarily, we can undergo a change of a few degrees in temperature, without danger or serious inconvenience; but there is a limit, beyond which the change becomes perilous and even fatal. Suppose in a school, having a winter term of only four months, and consisting of but fifty scholars, one quarter of an hour in a day, on an average, is lost for all purposes of study, in consequence of the too great heat or cold of the room; the aggregate loss, allowing six hours to a day, will be two hundred days, or more than eight months. And yet, in many of our schools, half the day, for all purposes of improvement, is, by this cause alone, substantially lost.

Every keeper of a green-house regulates its heat by a thermometer. The northern blasts which come down upon the blossoms of a farmer's orchard or garden, chill him as much as them. When shall we apply the same measure of wisdom to the welfare of children as to that of fruits and vegetables! I am told by physicians, that from sixty-five to seventy degrees is a proper temperature for a room. Something, however, must depend upon the habits of the children. In cities, there is generally less exposure to cold, than in the country; and factory children would suffer from cold, when those employed in the out-door occupations of agriculture would be comfortably warm.*

---

* We give below two letters, one from Col. Jenkins, an experienced architect in the city of Boston, the other from Dr. Woodward, the Superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, on the subject of the construction of schoolhouses. The suggestions will be found very important. Though published in the 8th No. of our Journal, we deem them worthy of a re-insertion here.—Ed.

"*Boston, Jan.* 21, 1839.

"Dear Sir,—Your favor of the 19th is just received. In answer to your question, 'whether it is a healthful way of finishing rooms, to plaster them upon a solid brick wall, without furring,' I think, in a word, that it is *not*.

"It is almost, perhaps quite, impossible that walls will not be penetrated by water, and conduct it through to the inner surface; some expedients have been adopted, in order to obviate this evil—as in prisons and hospitals, where it is unsafe to attach any finish to the walls, which could be removed by the inmates, and made the instruments of mischief in their hands. One method has been, to construct the walls with an interstice, or separation in the wall, between the outer and inner courses of the brick-work, when made of brick, and on the same principle when of stone. The objections to this are obvious. Unless the walls are made much thicker than otherwise neces-

### SIZE.

The next thing in point of importance in regard to a schoolhouse is its dimensions. In almost every thing heretofore written on this subject, the size of the school-room, in proportion to the number of scholars, has been a very leading topic. And, certainly, if there be no special means provided for changing the air in the room, the importance of liberal dimensions cannot be exaggerated. But if, instead of forcing foul air back again and again into the children's lungs, we permit nature to perform her gratuitous and beneficent labor, by carrying it beyond their reach, as soon as it has once been respired, then one main object of increasing the size of the room is already accomplished. The great end of a supply of healthful air being secured, the dimensions of the room are left to be determined by other considerations. These are, the convenient arrangement of the seats, so that the teacher can survey the whole school with a single look; so that each scholar can have an easy access to his own seat, without disturbing or being disturbed by any other; and so as to remove the temptations to communicate, to play, or to aggress.

In regard to the size of the rooms, it may be observed, generally, that in addition to the room requisite for seats and desks, as described below, there should be an open space all round the walls, at least two feet and a half in width, besides room for common recitations, and for the teacher's desk. Seats may be attached to the walls for the accommodation of visitors, or for the scholars, should it ever be desirable, for any purpose, to arrange them in a continuous line. Movable benches may be provided—instead of seats fastened to the wall—to be taken away, when not wanted for use, and so to leave that space entirely unoccupied. Joseph Lancaster, in making arrangements for great numbers of the children of the poor, where cheapness was a main object,

---

sary, their strength is materially lessened, and their liability to be penetrated by the weather proportionably increased. The outer and inner parts of the wall must be banded together by separate stones or bricks, which, in themselves, are conductors of moisture; the vacuum also is liable to be filled with rubbish or other nuisances. I suppose your inquiry has reference more especially to schoolrooms, and you will permit me to remark, that walls plastered upon the brick-work, without furring, are not only liable to dampness, but always cold, and, next to iron or marble, conductors of heat. Now, the youth in school are always allowed, and much enjoy and improve, recesses for play and exercise; they return to their studies, glowing with a brisk circulation of vital warmth, and it is clear, if in this state they come in contact with such a wall or any other powerful conductor, a sudden change is produced, and the subject is injured in health. Add to this, the uncomfortableness of such a wall:—it is also cheerless and unpleasant, and nothing of this kind should come in contact with the mental or physical sense of the student. Will you pardon me, sir, if I mention also, though aside from your inquiries, that the proportions and ventilation of schoolrooms are of vast moment to the wellbeing and improvement of the pupil. I think there is native taste in every well-balanced mind, though uneducated; whatever, therefore, is brought in constant contact with that of the learner, should be symmetrical and agreeable.

"The gas which is generated in assemblies of youth, will arise and escape through attic ventilators, while that produced by adults is more dense, and of such a nature as to require apertures below to allow its escape. These last hints are gratuitous, but your efforts in the cause of Education will lead you to favor any auxiliary, however humble.

"I remain, sir, very respectfully, your ob't serv't, J. JENKINS."

"*Worcester, Feb.* 27, 1839.

"Dear Sir,—I received your favor of the 25th instant, in which you propose the inquiry, 'whether you think it a safe or proper mode of constructing brick buildings, to plaster the inside of the exterior walls, directly upon the bricks, or without furring?'"

"Many persons object to brick houses, because they are damp; others think them colder than houses built of wood. The reason for both objections, lies in the fact, that many houses are plastered on the brick walls. If the walls of a brick house are furred or built hollow, they are nearly or quite as dry as a house built of wood, and quite as warm.

"A brick wall, eight inches thick, is rarely so tight as to exclude the external air or the rain in a driving storm; and of course should never be plastered on the inside, but be furred so as to leave a space for air between the the wall and plastering. All brick walls, but particularly thick ones, are generally colder than the atmosphere of the rooms, and will transmit the heat so rapidly as to form a condensation of the vapor of the atmosphere upon them, rendering them damp, and this moisture frequently accumulates in such quantity as to be visible in drops and currents upon the wall. Such houses can neither be comfortable nor healthful.

"If the walls of a house are not constructed so as to be hollow, or have a vacant space of an inch or two in the brick-work, they ought to be furred, lathed, and plastered, so as to leave a space for air between the brick and plastering, which makes the house both warmer and dryer than it can otherwise be made.

"Some years ago, I was frequently in a very handsome brick house, built at great expense, but the exterior walls were plastered on the brick. It had many occupants, all of whom concurred in the statement, that the house was damp, and that articles of clothing, in closets no way connected with the outer walls of the house, would become mouldy, and spoil, if not attended to frequently; and that all clothing and bedding in rooms not constantly occupied, would be so damp as *to be* quite unsafe and unfit for use.

"Yours, very truly and affectionately, SAMUEL B. WOODWARD."

allows nine feet area, on the floor, to each scholar. His rooms were fifteen or twenty feet high. If only fifteen feet high, an area of nine feet would give one hundred and thirty-five cubic feet of space to each scholar; and one hundred and thirty-five cubic feet in a room ten feet high, would give to each scholar an area four feet in length and almost three feet and a half in width. Even at this rate, a family of six persons would have a room only about eight feet by ten.

### DESKS, SEATS, &c.

It seems to be a very prevalent opinion, at the present day, amongst all professional teachers, that seats on a horizontal floor, are preferable to those which rise on the sides or at the end of a room, or both, in the form of an amphitheatre. And it is obviously a great fault in the construction of a room, if, when a class is brought upon the floor to recite, the teacher is obliged to turn his back upon the school, when he looks at the class, or upon the class when he looks at the school. A level floor also increases the space for air, and as the room is warmed downwards, it makes the temperature more equable. The seats with desks should be arranged in parallel lines, lengthwise of the room, with aisles between, each seat to accommodate one scholar only. Although it would be better that they should be moveable, yet as this cannot, perhaps, ordinarily be done for district schools, the front side of one seat may be the back of the next, in the row. Eighteen inches is, perhaps, a suitable width for the aisles. Each desk should be two feet long, and not less than one foot and six inches wide. A width of one foot and nine inches would be better. In some houses, the seats connected with single desks are one foot square, and are placed behind the middle of the desks; in others the seats are one foot wide and as long as the desks. It may sometimes be desirable to place two scholars temporarily on the same seat, as for the purpose of reading from the same book. The former arrangement would make this impracticable. The children will sit more easily and more upright, if the back of the seats slope a little from them, at the shoulder-blades; and also, if the seats themselves incline a little—the front part being a little the highest. The forward part of the desk should be level for about three or four inches. The residue should have a slight inclination. A slope of an inch and a half in a foot would, probably, be sufficient. It should not be so great, as that books and slates would slide off. For the deposit of books, and so forth, there may be a shelf under the desk, or the desk may be a box, with a cover, hung upon hinges for a lid. The first method supercedes the necessity of raising a lid, by which books, pencils, and so forth, are sometimes thrown upon the floor or upon the front neighbor. The shelf, however, is far less convenient, and the contents are liable to be perpetually dropped out. The box and lid, on the whole, seem much preferable, the sloping part of the cover to constitute the lid. For the security of the desks, locks and keys are sometimes used. But the keys will occasionally be lost, by accident; and sometimes, by bad scholars, on purpose. Besides, what appalling images throng the mind, at the reflection, that the earliest associations of children in regard to the security of property amongst themselves, must be of locks and hiding-places, instead of honesty and justice! The board which makes the front of one seat and the back of the next, should rise, perhaps, a couple of inches, above the level of the horizontal part of the desk, to prevent things from sliding off forwards. Into this horizontal part of the desk, the inkstands may be let: so loosely, however, as to allow of their being taken out to be filled; and so deep that their tops will be on a level with the desks. They may be covered, either with a metallic lid, resembling a butt hinge, to rise and fall; or, which is better, with a common slide, or with a flat circular piece of pewter, having a stem projecting on one side, like the stem of a watch, through which a nail or screw may be driven, not tightly, but so that the cover may be made to slide over or off the orifice of the inkstand, on the nail or screw, as a hinge.

Instead of the form of desks, above described, I have seen some, constructed after the plan of Mr. Alcott's Prize Essay, in which the box or case for the books, and so forth, is in the front part of the desk; that is, in the horizontal and not the sloping part of the desk above described. They are made about eight inches in width, and deep enough to receive the largest atlases, slates and writing-books, when placed edgewise, for which purpose, an inch or two on one side of the box is partitioned off. The lid is hung on hinges, as above described, and when shut forms a part of the desk.*

* Mr. Alcott's Prize Essay may be found at the end of the second volume of the Lectures, published by the American Institute of Instruction, in 1831, and is a very valuable paper.

Last year, a gentleman in Hartford, Conn., offered a handsome premium for the best form of a desk for schools. Several plans were submitted to the judges, selected to award the premium. They decided in favor of a desk, designed to accommodate two scholars, upon one seat. The desk was a tight box, without any lid, but having an oblong opening, *at each end*, large enough to admit books, slates, &c. In this way, whatever was put in or taken out of the desk would be exposed to the view of the teacher and scholars.

The edge of the desk and of the seat should be in the same perpendicular line. This will not allow the scholar to stand up in front of his seat; but if the seats and desks are single, he can stand on one side of the seat. If the seats and desks are designed for two scholars, then the corner of each scholar's seat may be cut off.

In regard to the height of the seats, it is common to give exact measurements. But inflexible rules will never fit varying circumstances. Some schoolrooms are for females; others for boys only. In factory villages, usually, a great proportion of the scholars are young; while, in one county in the State, great numbers of the males attending school, during the winter term, are more than sixteen years of age. To follow unvarying rules, therefore, would aggrieve as many as it would accommodate. But the principles to be observed are few, and capable of a definite exposition. A live child cannot be expected to sit still, unless he has a support to his back, and a firm resting-place for his feet. As a scholar sits upright in his seat, the knee joint forming a right angle, and the feet being planted horizontally on the floor, no pressure whatever should come upon the thigh bone where it crosses the edge of the seat. If obliged to sit upon too high a seat, a foot-board or block should always be provided for the feet to rest upon. Children sometimes go to school at an age when many of their bones are almost as limber as a green withe, when almost any one of the numerous joints in the body may be loosened or distorted. They go almost as early, as when the Chinese turn their children's feet into the shape of horses' hoofs; or when some tribes of Indians make their children's heads as square as a joiner's box. And, at this period of life, when portions of the bones are but little more than cartilage, and the muscles will stretch like sheep's leather, the question is, whether the seats shall be conformed to the children, or the children shall be deformed to the seats. I wish to fortify myself on this subject, by making a few extracts from a lecture on Physical Education, by that celebrated surgeon, Dr. John C. Warren. "When children are sent to school, care should be taken, that they are not confined too long. Children under fourteen should not be kept in school more than six or seven hours in a day; and this period should be shortened for females. It is expedient, that it should be broken into many parts, so as to avoid a long confinement at one time. Young persons, however well disposed, cannot support a restriction to one place and one posture. Nature resists such restrictions; and if enforced, they are apt to created disgust with the means and the object. Thus children learn to hate studies, that might be rendered agreeable, and they take an aversion to instructors, who would otherwise be interesting to them.

"The postures they assume, while seated at their studies, are not indifferent. They should be frequently warned against the practice of maintaining the head and neck long in a stooping position, and the disposition to it should be lessened by giving a proper elevation and slope to the desk, and the seat should have a support or back.

"The influence of an upright form and open breast has been sufficiently explained; and what may be done to acquire these qualities, is shown by many remarkable facts, one of which I will mention. For a great number of years, it has been the custom in France to give to young females of the earliest age, the habit of holding back the shoulders, and thus expanding the chest. From the observation of anatomists, lately made, it appears that the clavicle or collar bone is actually longer in females of the French nation, than in those of the English. The French have succeeded in the development of a part, in a way that adds to health and beauty, and increases a characteristic, that distinguishes the human being from the brute.

"While all of us are desirous of possessing the excellent qualities of strength, hardiness, and beauty, how defective are our own systems of education in the means of acquiring them?

"In the course of my observations, I have been able to satisfy myself, that about half the young females, brought up as they are at present, undergo some visible and obvious change of structure; that a considerable number are the subjects of great and permanent deviations; and that not a few entirely lose their health from the manner in which they are reared.

"I feel warranted in the assertion, that, of the well-educated females, within my sphere of experience, about *one-half are affected with some degree of distortion of spine.*

"The *lateral* distortion of the spine is almost wholly confined to females, and is scarcely ever found existing in the other sex. The difference results from a difference of habits during the school education. The immediate cause of the lateral curve of the spine to the right, is the elevation and action of the right arm in drawing and writing."

Much more might be quoted, apposite to this important subject. It seems only necessary to add, that nothing so essentially tends to aggravate these evils, as the want of a proper resting-place for the feet. Let any man try the experiment, and see how long he can sit in an upright posture, on a narrow bench or seat, without being able to reach the floor with his feet, and consequently with the whole weight of his feet, boots, and the lower parts of the limbs, acting with the power of a lever across the middle of the thigh bones. Yet, to this position, hundreds of children in this State, are regularly confined, month after month; and while condemned to this unnatural posture, Nature inflicts her punishments of insupportable uneasiness and distress on every joint and muscle, if they do sit still, and the teacher inflicts his punishments, if they do not. A gentleman, extensively known to the citizens of this State, for the benevolence of his character, and the candor of his statements, who, for the last twenty years, has probably visited more of our common schools, than any other person in the State, writes to me as follows: "I have no hesitation in repeating what I have often publicly declared, that, from the bad construction of our schoolhouses, there is more physical suffering endured by our children in them, than by prisoners in our jails and prisons."* The following is an extract of a letter, addressed to a '*Common School Convention*,' held at Northampton, in February, 1837, by Dr. Joseph H. Flint, of that place: "For want of attention to the subject," (the construction of schoolhouses,) "I have the means of knowing, that there has been annually loss of life, destruction of health, and in numberless instances, anatomical deformities, that render life hardly worth having. In the construction of schoolhouses, there are many considerations, involving the comfort, and health, and life, of the young," &c.

I am informed by surgeons and physicians, that a pupil, when writing, should face the writing-desk squarely. This position avoids all unequal lateral pressure upon the spinal column, and of course all unequal tension of the muscles on either side of it. It also interferes least with the free play of the thoracic viscera, which is a point of great importance. The edge of the desk should then be an inch or two above the bend of the elbow, as the arm hangs nearly by the side. Any slight want of exact adjustment can be corrected, by extending the elbow further from, or bringing it nearer to the body.

The height of the seats and desks should of course be graduated, to fit the different sizes of the scholars; the smallest scholars sitting nearest the teacher's desk.

The arrangement of seats without desks, for small scholars, when needed, is too obvious to require any explanation. Their proper position will depend upon the other arrangements of the school-room. Long benches, having separate chair-shaped seats, but with a continuous back, are sometimes used.

The place for hanging hats, bonnets, and so forth, will also depend upon the general construction of the house. It should be such as to encourage habits of neatness and order.

The instructor's desk should be upon a platform, raised so high as to give him a view of the persons of the pupils above their desks. When the school is not large, it should be at the end of the room. It should overlook the play-ground. Cases for the deposit and preservation of the apparatus and library, should be near the desk, except where a separate apartment is provided. A teacher without apparatus,—however numerous may be his books,—is like a mechanic with but half a set of tools.

The average number of scholars in the schools in Massachusetts, is about fifty. When the school is large, there should be a separation of the older from the younger children, and the latter, at least, placed under the care of a female teacher. The opinion is almost universal, in this State, that female teaching for young children is in every respect superior to male. If the number of the older scholars be large, there should be a separate recitation room, and a door and an entry for the entrance and accommodation of each sex.

In very large schools, it may be thought expedient to have desks, sufficiently long to accommodate six or more scholars, with chairs, fastened to the floor, for seats, and a space between the chairs and the next tier of desks, for passing in and out. In such cases, the desks may be placed longitudinally, and the teacher's platform for himself and assistants, extend the whole length of the room, in front of them.

---

* The Rev. Gardiner B. Perry, of Bradford.

I now come to a subject, which I think of primary importance. It is the almost universal practice of teachers to call their classes out upon the floor for reading and recitation. If there were no other reason, the change of position it gives them, is a sufficient one. The seats in school-rooms, are, almost without exception, so arranged, that these proceedings take place in full view of all the scholars; and they are often so, that when the teacher turns his face towards the class, he must turn his back upon the school. The idle and disorderly seize upon such occasions to violate the rules of the school. This, they can generally do, with perfect impunity. They can screen themselves from observation, by moving the head so that an intermediate scholar shall intercept the teacher's view; or by holding up a book, slate, or atlas before themselves, and under such shield can whisper, eat, or grimace. But the effect upon the attentive is worse, than upon the idle; and its tendency is to turn the former into the latter. The eye is the quickest of all the senses, and the minds of children always yield instant obedience to it, and follow wherever it leads. Every one must have observed, that when a class is reciting in presence of a school, if anything unusual or incongruous transpires, such as the falling of a book or slate, or the ludicrous pronunciation of a word, the attention of every scholar is broken off from his study. The blunder or stammering of a four years' old child, learning letters, will strike every hand in the school off its work. While the senses, and especially the eye, are bringing vivid images to the mind, it is almost impossible for men, and quite so for children, to deny them access. Much of what the world admires as talent, is only a power of fixing attention upon an object, and of looking steadily at it until the whole of it is seen. The power of concentration is one of the most valuable of intellectual attainments, because it is the principal means of achieving any other; and the pupil, with but little positive knowledge, in whom this has become a habit of mind, has a far higher chance of success in any walk of life, than one with a thousand times the knowledge, but without the habit. This power is an acquired one as much as any other; and as susceptible as any other of improvement. But overtasking destroys it, just as overloading the limbs crushes, instead of strengthening them. Reference must be had, therefore, to the ordinary powers of children's minds, or we shall have distraction instead of abstraction. Much fixedness of thought, ought not to be expected from the giddiness and volatility of children. In rooms of the common construction, I do not believe that more than one-half of the time is available for study. Not only, therefore, ought the desire of strengthening this power to be inspired, but the arrangement of the room and the tactics of the school should be made to contribute, unconsciously to the children, to the same effect. Although the habits of the mind are the main thing to be regarded in education, yet it cannot be denied that one hour of concentrated attention on any subject is worth more than a week's listless hovering and floating around it. Hence, where there is no separate recitation-room, (which, however, every large school ought to have,) the area for that purpose, should be behind the scholars who remain in their seats. The teacher can then take such a position at the end of the room, opposite his desk, as to command at once, a view of the reciting class and the rest of the school. He will then see, without being seen. The scholars can interpose nothing between themselves and him. Every scholar would be convinced, by strict vigilance on the part of the teacher, during the first week of the school, that he had no power of violating rules without detection. They would, therefore, yield to the necessity of the case. The temptation would die with the opportunity to gratify it. The ear only of the scholars would be solicited to notice the voices behind them, while the stronger attraction of visible objects, the book, the slate, the map, would rivet eye and mind upon the subjects of study. This slight interruption in the rear, while the mind enjoyed such advantages for overcoming it, would increase its power of continuous attention, and enable it, in after life, to carry on processes of thought in the midst of conversation or other disturbing occurrences. Still, it is thought, that the teacher's desk should always face those of the scholars; so that when a class recites in the seats, when the whole school joins in any exercise, or when they are to be addressed, each party should be able to see the other face to face. The social principle will never, otherwise, flow freely.

### LOCATION OF SCHOOLHOUSES.

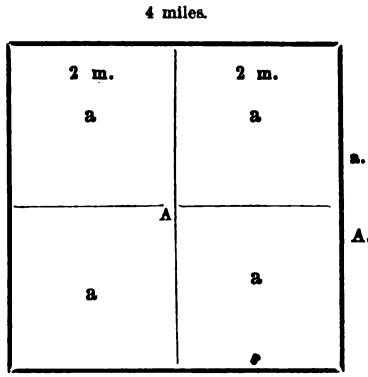
All philosophers agree that external objects affect temper and character. If their influences are imperceptible, the results will be so much the surer, because imperceptible influences are never resisted. Because children cannot analyze and state in propositions the feelings, which outward circumstances breathe into their susceptible minds, it is no proof, that they are not undergoing insensible changes. Every body recognises the silent influences of external nature, if exerted only for a few days, in

the case of those religious sects, who use the forest for a temple. Fatal contagions enter through the skin or lungs, without sending forward any herald. Subtile influences upon such delicate tissues as the nerves and brain are not seen in the process, but only in the result. But experience and reason enable us to foresee such consequences, and, foreseeing, to control them. Adults alone can perform such a duty. If they neglect it, the children must suffer.

It has been often objected to the people of our State, that they insist upon having the schoolhouse in the geographical centre of the district. And, other things being equal, surely it ought to be in the centre. But the house is erected for the children, and not for the acres; and the inconvenience of going fifty or even eighty rods further is not to be compared with the benefit of spending a whole day in a healthful, comfortable, pleasing spot,—one full of salutary influences upon the feelings and temper. Place a schoolhouse in a bleak and unsheltered situation, and the difficulty of attaining and preserving a proper degree of warmth is much increased; put it upon a sandy plain,—without shade or shelter from the sun, and the whole school is subjected to the evils of heat and dust; plant it in low marshy grounds, and it exposes to colds or to more permanent diseases of the lungs, and impairs habits of cleanliness both in dress and person; make one side of it the boundary of a public road, and the persons of the children are endangered by the travel, when out, and their attention, when in, called off the lesson by every passer by; place it on a little remnant or delta of land, where roads encircle it on all sides, without any place of seclusion from the public gaze, and the modesty of nature will be overlaid with habits of indecorum; and a want of decency, enforced upon boys and girls, will become physical and moral turpitude in men and women. But build it, where some sheltering hill or wood mitigates the inclemency of winter; where a neighboring grove tempers the summer heat, furnishing cool and shady walks; remove it a little from the public highway, and from buildings where noisy and clattering trades are carried on; and, above all, rescue it from sound or sight of all resorts for license and dissipation, and a sensibility to beauty, a purity of mind, a sentiment of decency and propriety will be developed and fostered, and the chances of elevated feelings and correct conduct in afterlife, will be increased manifold. Habits of mental order and propriety are best cherished amidst external order and propriety. It is a most beautiful trait in the character of children, that they take the keenest delight in the simplest pleasures. Their desires do not tax commerce for its luxuries, nor exhaust wealth for its embellishments. Such pleasures as are imparted by the cheerful light and the quickening air, by the wayside flowers, the running stream, or the music of birds, are sufficient for the more gentle and pensive; and the impetuous and exuberant of spirit only want a place to let off the redundant activity of their arms and legs. And how cheaply can these sources of gratification be purchased! Sometimes a little of the spirit of compromise; sometimes a little forgetfulness of strifes among the parents, engendered on other subjects, would secure to the children the double boon of utility and enjoyment. Yet how often are the unoffending children ground between the collisions of their parents!

It seems not unconnected with this subject to inquire, whether, in many places out of our cities, a plan may not be adopted to give greater efficiency to the means, now devoted to common-school education. The population of many towns is so situated as conveniently to allow a gradation of the schools. For children under the age of eight or ten years, about a mile seems a proper limit, beyond which they should not be required to travel to school. On this supposition, one house, as centrally situated as circumstances will permit, would accommodate the population upon a territory of four square miles, or, which is the same thing, two miles square. But a child above that age can go two miles to school, or even rather more, without serious inconvenience. There are many persons, whose experience attests, that they never enjoyed better health, or made greater progress, than when they went two miles and a half or three miles, daily, to school. Supposing, however, the most remote scholars to live only at about the distance of two miles from the school, one house will then accommodate all the older children upon a territory of about sixteen square miles, or four miles square. Under such an arrangement, while there were four schools in a territory of four miles square, i. e. sixteen square miles, for the younger children, there would be one central school for the older. Suppose there is $600 to be divided amongst the inhabitants of this territory of sixteen square miles, or $150 for each of the four districts. Suppose further, that the average wages for male teachers is $25, and for female $12.50, per month. If, according to the present system, four male teachers are employed for the winter term, and four female for the summer, each of the summer and winter schools may be kept four months. The money would then be exhausted; i. e. four months summer, at $12.50=$50, and four months winter, at $25=$100;—both=$150. But according to the plan suggested, the same money would pay for six months, summer

school, instead of four, in each of the four districts, and for a male teacher's school eight months, at $35 a month, instead of four months, at $25 a month, and would then leave $20 in the treasury.




By this plan, the great superiority of female over male training, for children under eight, ten, or twelve years of age, would be secured; the larger scholars would be separated from the smaller, and thus the great diversity of studies and of classes in the same school, which now crumbles the teacher's time into dust, would be avoided; the female schools would be lengthened one half; the length of the male schools would be doubled, and for the increased compensation, a teacher of fourfold qualifications could be employed. Undoubtedly, in many towns, upon the Cape or among the mountains, the course of the roads and the face of the territory would present insuperable obstacles to the full reduction of this scheme to practice. But it is as unquestionable, that in many others no physical impediments exist to its immediate adoption; especially, if we consider the legal power of different towns to unite portions of their territory for the joint maintenance of schools. We have not yet brought the power of united action to bear with half its force upon the end or the means of education. I think it will yet be found more emphatically true in this department of human action, than in any other, that adding individual means multiplies social power. If four districts cannot be united, three may. If the central point of the territory happen to be populous, a schoolhouse may be built, consisting of two rooms; one for the large, the other for the small scholars; both upon the same floor, or one above the other. It ought to be remarked, that where there are two schoolrooms under the same roof, care should be taken to have the walls well deafened, so that neither should ever be incommoded by any noises in the other.

The above enumeration of requisites in a schoolhouse is considered absolutely essential and indispensable. Just so far as they are disregarded, that nursery for the rearing of vigorous, intelligent, and upright men, must fail of its object. If the children's lungs are fed only with noxious and corrupted air, which has once performed its office, and is, therefore, incapable of performing it again, without renovation, it may generate positive and incurable disease, and impair the energies both of body and mind for the residue of life. "In looking back upon the languor of *fifty years* of labor as a teacher," said the venerable Mr. Woodbridge, "reiterated with many a weary day, I attribute a great proportion of it to *mephitic air*; nor can I doubt that it has compelled *many worthy and promising teachers* to quit the employment. Neither can I doubt that it has been *the great cause* of their subsequent sickly habits and untimely decease." People, who shudder at a flesh-wound and a trickle of blood, will confine their children like convicts, and compel them, month after month, to breathe quantities of poison. It would less impair the mental and physical constitutions of our children, gradually to draw an ounce of blood from their veins, during the same length of time, than to send them to breathe, for six hours in a day, the lifeless and poisoned air of some of our schoolrooms. Let any man, who votes for confining children in small rooms and keeping them on stagnant air, try the experiment of breathing his own breath only four times over; and, if medical aid be not at hand, the children will never be endangered by his vote afterwards. Such darkening and benumbing of the mind accustoms it, in *its first beginnings, to look* at objects, as it were, through a haze, and to seize them

with a feeble grasp, and robs it of the pleasure of seeing things in a bright light. Children always feel a keen delight in the consciousness of overcoming difficulties, and of fully comprehending any subject. This pleasure is the most legitimate of all rewards, and one which Nature always pays down on the spot. But, instead of this, after filling their brains with bird-lime, we taunt or chastise them, if they stick or get posed. If a child suffer from heat or cold, from a constrained or unnatural position; if his attention be perpetually broken off by causes beyond his control; it tends to make his temper fretful and irritable, and compels him to go back, again and again, to the beginning of his problem or exercise, like a traveller obliged to return home and commence his journey anew after having completed half its distance.

### LIGHT. WINDOWS.

THE manner in which a schoolhouse is lighted is of no inconsiderable consequence. The additional cost of obeying philosophical principles is, at most, trivial. We ought also to remember, that the laws of Nature are never violated with impunity. In modern times the eye is much more used than it formerly was. Civilization has imposed multiplied and difficult labors upon that organ. Perhaps the eye gives fewer monitions of being overworked, than any other bodily power. It seems more to exhaust its strength, and then fail irrecoverably. If so, it should be protected by the foresight of reason. When provision is not made for admitting into a schoolroom a good deal more light than is ordinarily wanted, there will frequently be too little, and no remedy. Hence the windows should be such, as to furnish sufficient light at all times and means should be provided for excluding any excess. Window-blinds and curtains, therefore, are essential. The transitions of light in the open air are very great; but it is to be observed, that there is no out-of door occupation which severely tasks the eye. But in a school-room, without blinds or curtains, when the sun is allowed to shine directly upon a child's head, book, or desk, the transition is greater and more sudden than in the open air; while, at the same time, the eye, being intensely engaged in looking at minute objects, has its pupil widely distended, so that the greatest quantity of light falls upon the optic nerve.

The following is extracted from a lecture, delivered by Dr. Reynolds, of Boston, before the American Institute of Instruction, in 1833. "How much talent lies dormant by the morbidly sensitive eyesight, occasioned by inordinate and untimely use of the eyes! This last-mentioned evil is increasing to a fearful amount among the young. Accurate inquiries have convinced me, that a large number of these individuals must go back to the schoolroom to find the source of their infirmities."

No persons, going with their eyes unprotected, ever cross the Andes, without losing their sight. The glare of light from the snow destroys it. Such facts admonish us to beware of exposing the eyes of the young, either to very intense light, or to great transitions, while engaged in looking at small letters, or in making fine marks on white paper. To say that the loss or impairing of sight is an evil too contingent and uncertain to demand precaution, is neither philosophical nor humane. Admit, that it is a contingent and uncertain evil, in regard to any particular individual, so exposed; as it is uncertain, which of the children, in Egypt, shall be blind men; yet that some one out of a given number, subjected to the danger, shall be blind, is as certain as any law of Nature. Laws applicable to classes of men are just as infallible in their operation as those applicable to individuals, though we cannot foresee upon which of the individuals in the class the law is to be verified. In a multitude of cases, each tendency, however slight, will have its quota of the results. Hence the necessity of meeting tendencies with prevention.*

In order that passing, out-door objects and events may not draw off the attention of the scholars, it is usually recommended to insert the windows so high, that such objects and events will be invisible in the schoolroom. It cannot, however, be denied that this gives to the room a prison or cellar-like appearance. May not such interruptions be better avoided by selecting a retired situation, and by arranging the seats, so that the scholars shall sit facing from the road? Nor can there be any necessity of having the windows very high for this purpose. As scholars sit in their seats, the eyes of but few will be more than three feet and a half from the floor. This would allow of windows six feet deep in a room ten feet high. So, too, it would be a perfect security against the evil, if the lower sash, or the lowest part of it, were glazed with ground glass. The windows should be made so that the upper sash can be lowered. This may be very desirable in summer, independently of the considerations, above urged, in regard to ventilation.

*See article C, appended.

YARDS OR PLAY-GROUNDS.

On this subject, I have never seen, nor am I able to prepare, any thing so judicious, and apposite to the condition of the districts in Massachusetts, as the following paragraphs, taken from a Report, published in 1833, "by order of the Directors of the Essex County Teachers' Association."

"As the situation should be pleasant and healthful, so there should be sufficient space around the building. With the number who ordinarily attend these institutions, not less than a quarter of an acre should ever be thought of as a space for their accommodation; and this should be enclosed from the public highway, so as to secure it from cattle, that the children may have a safe and clean place for exercise at recess and at other times. We believe it no uncommon thing for a district to meet with difficulty in procuring a place for a house; for while most wish it to be near, they are unwilling to have it stand on a notch, taken out of their own field. This reluctance to accommodate the district may have been carried too far; the actual, may be less than the imagined evils. Yet it is not without foundation; for in most instances, from the scanty and niggardly provision made by the district, the man knows that his own cultivated fields must and will be made the place of the scholars' recreation. We do not overstate, when we say, that more than half the inconveniences which persons thus experience in their property from the contiguity of a schoolhouse, arises from the insufficient provision made for the children by the district. While all the district may think that a neighbor is unaccommodating, because he is unwilling to let them have just land enough to set their house upon, the real truth is, that the smallness of the lot is the very thing which justifies his reluctance; for whether he theorize or not on the subject, he well understands that he will have to afford accommodations, which the district are unwilling on their part to purchase. Every schoolhouse lot should be large enough for the rational exercise which the children ought to have, and will take. It would be well to have it large enough to contain some ornamental and fruit trees, with flower-borders, which we know children may be taught to cultivate and enjoy; and by an attention to which their ideas of property, and common rights, and obligations, would become more distinct. By attention to what belonged to themselves, they would be kept from many of those wanton injuries too often done to the possessions of those near them.

"In regard to space, no one can be ignorant of the general practice. We believe it would be difficult in this county to find a score of these buildings, where the lot is as large as the most inexperienced on the subject on the subject would judge necessary.

"In by far the greater number of instances, there is no more ground than that which is occupied by the building; while many of them actually stand partly or wholly in the highway. The children, therefore, have no resort but to the public highway, or the private property of their neighbors, for amusement. Healthful and vigorous exercise is restrained, the modesty of nature is often outraged, and, not unfrequently, a permanent and extensive injury done to the finer and better feelings, which ought, at that age, to be cultivated and confirmed by the most careful attention, not only as a great security from sin, but as a most lovely ornament through life. Besides this, there being no place for pleasant exercise for the boys out of doors, the school-room, during the intermission at noon, becomes the place of noise and tumult, where, not from any real intention, but in the forgetfulness of general excitement, gentlemanly and lady-like feelings are turned into ridicule, and an attempt to behave in an orderly and becoming manner subjects the individual to no small degree of persecution. We have often witnessed such instances, and known those who refused to engage in these rude exercises, forced out of the room and kept out during the greater part of an intermission, because their example cast a damp upon a course of rude and boisterous conduct, in which they could not take a part. Whatever others may think, it is our belief, that this noise and tumult are in a great measure the natural overflowing of youthful buoyancy, which, were it allowed to spend itself in out-door amusements, would hardly ever betray itself improperly in the house."

There is another topic of primary importance, the merits of which are so well developed in a portion of the "Report" above referred to, that I shall need no apology for transferring it to these pages. It regards

THE DUTY OF INSTRUCTORS IN RELATION TO SCHOOLHOUSES.

"Though Instructors may, ordinarily, have no direct agency in erecting and repairing the buildings where they are employed to keep school, yet by a little carefulness, ingenuity, and enterprise, they can do much to avoid some of the evils connected with them. When about to open a school they can look at the house, as a mechanic

at his shop, and adapt their system to the building, and not carry into a house, ill adapted to its development, a system of operations, however speculatively just it may appear in their own minds. The buildings are already constructed, and of materials not over plastic, and often as incapable of accommodating a system got up in some other place, as the house of the Vicar of Wakefield was, for the family painting. Instructors should make the most of what is comfortable and convenient, and remedy, as far as possible, what is bad. If the pupils are uncomfortably seated, they can allow them occasionally to change their seats, or alter their position, which, though attended with some inconvenience, cannot be compared with the evils growing out of pain and restlessness, and the effects which are likely to be produced upon the health, the disposition, morals, and progress in learning, from a long confinement in an uneasy position. Instructors can, and ought to use their influence and authority to preserve the buildings from injuries, such as cutting the tables, loosening and splitting the seats, breaking the doors and windows, by which most houses of this class are shamefully mutilated, and their inconveniences, great enough at first, are increased. The extent to which injuries of this kind are done, and the inconveniences arising from them in respect of writing-books and clothes, are great beyond what is ordinarily thought; and as it is possible in a considerable degree to prevent them, they should not be tolerated. So far as the scholars are concerned, they may arise from a mixture of causes;—thoughtlessness, idleness, a restless disposition, or real intent to do injury. But whatever may be the cause, it argues an imperfection in the moral principle, which, were it in wholesome exercise, would teach them that it is equally iniquitous to damage public as private property. The practice we refer to, is actual injustice, a real trespass, for which, in almost all other cases, the offender would be called to an account. And we must confess that it a matter of just surprise, that more efforts have not been made to prevent it. A high responsibility relative to this concern, rests on the instructors. The power of preventing this, lies principally with them. It is obvious then to remark, if they have much reason to complain for want of better accommodations, they have some reason to reform; and in measuring out the blame which justly rests somewhere, to take a little portion to themselves. We are persuaded that schoolhouses will be more readily built and repaired, when instructors shall use more exertions to save them from the folly and indiscretion of children. The injuries complained of, we are persuaded, if not wholly, yet to a great extent, can be prevented; and it is high time that parents and teachers should bring together their fixed and operative determination, to suffer them no longer. Separate from the inconveniences which scholars themselves experience from them, a licentious and irresponsible feeling in regard to public property is encouraged. If the well-known loose sense of obligation in respect to public interests, and the wanton injuries which are so frequently done to institutions of a public nature of every description, so pre-eminently common throughout this country, do not spring up in the habits referred to, they are certainly most powerfully fostered by them; and there is great reason to apprehend, that a principle so loose in respect to public property, must extend itself by easy transitions to private. In every view the practice is wrong, and the effect corrupting; and it is high time, that the attention of the community was directed to it, the obligations of men on this subject, more fully taught, and, when necessary, enforced in all our institutions of learning, from the Infant School to the Professional Hall, not excepting our Theological Seminaries, where, if in any place, we should expect regard would be paid to public rights, and the bestowments of private munificence; and we could wish the evil complained of, stopped here; but truth constrains us to say, that the tables and seats of the Bench and Bar in our court-houses, the pews, and even the pulpits, in our places of religious worship, bear evident marks, that neither the '*ermine* nor the *lawn*,' is sufficient to restrain this most shameful, deforming, and mischievous practice.

"Teachers should take the *management* of the fire entirely under their own control; for though their own *feelings* may not be the thermometer of the room, yet, if they are at all qualified to teach, they must possess more discretion on the subject than those under them. They should see that the room is in a comfortable condition by the time the exercises commence. Many a half day is nearly wasted, and sometimes, from the disorder consequent upon the state of things, worse than lost, because, when the children collect, the room is so cold, that they cannot study, nor can they be still. Nothing short of the master's being in the house a half hour before the school commences, can, ordinarily, secure the object referred to. It may be objected, that instructors are not employed to build fires. We do not ask them to do it, but we ask them to see that fires are seasonably built. And we must think those who can define so nicely the limits of their obligations, as to excuse themselves from this care, have not the spirit of high-minded and enterprising teachers, and that, however worthy they may be, and

however well qualified for other employments, they should never offer themselves for that of school-keeping.

"Instructors should see, also, that the school-room be, in all its parts, kept in a clean and comfortable condition. Cleanliness is not ordinarily ranked so high, nor is the contrary habit ranked so low, in the scale of moral worth and sinful defilement, as they should be, nor do they, as we fear, enter so fully into the account when men are estimating their own moral state, or when others are estimating it for them, as they ought. We will not say, as a very able and careful observer of men once said, that he did not believe any person could be a true Christian, who was not becomingly neat in his person and in his business; yet we are free to say, that every additional year's intercourse with the world in moral and religious concerns, deepens the conviction, that cleanliness is inseparable from any considerable advancement in a religious life, and that where its requirements are disregarded, there is much reason to apprehend that other and important defects of a moral nature do, most probably, exist. Cleanliness in one's person, and the various occupations, is intimately connected with manly and upright conduct, chaste and pure thoughts, and sensible comfort in any situation; and, as a *service* exacted, or a *habit* established, would go far to secure good order and agreeable conduct in any school. We are persuaded that one of the most powerful helps towards good government, and consequent orderly conduct among the pupils, is overlooked, through inattention or ignorance, where this principle is not called in; and where an exertion to establish a principle and habit of neatness has not been put forth, one of the strong bonds to a future worthy moral conduct is lost, and a most important and legitimate object of instruction and education neglected. Great exertions should be used to cultivate among the pupils a taste for cleanliness, decency, and elegance in all things, and their particular responsibility in respect to the proper state of the house, and all its outward connections. This is their *home*, for the good and decent state of which, their character is at stake, and their comfort involved. They should firmly and perseveringly resolve, that the school-room should be kept clean; not simply swept, but often washed, and every day dusted. Without this attention, it is impossible their own persons, their clothes, their books, can be preserved in a decent and comfortable state. The room they should consider as their parlor, and those that occupy it, company to one another. The room must, therefore, always be in a visiting condition. And what should prevent this? Cannot a number of young people, all of whom, it must be presumed, are trained to order and neatness at home, bring the principles of order and neatness into an apartment, where they are to spend so much time together, and where any one, who knows much of the business of common families, must know there is less excuse for any disorder or dirt, than there is in most of our houses? We know it is practicable to have a school-room kept in a comfortable condition, and that youth instructed and encouraged to do this, and having their attention sufficiently directed to it, will soon become interested in the subject, and manifest a commendable disposition to have things as they ought to be, and a willingness to make all the personal efforts which are required, to accomplish it. And we are persuaded, that, when this is attempted, it will be found, perhaps, to the surprise of many, that from the less injury done to the clothes of scholars and to the books, as well as from the better conduct which will invariably ensue, many of the evils, connected with our Common Schools, would be removed.

"It is a fact, susceptible of as perfect demonstration as any moral proposition, that filth and dirt, if they be in part the effect, are, at the same time, among the most efficint causes of corrup morals and debased conduct. Gisborne, in one of his works, has a remark of this kind, (we do not pretend to quote his words,) that in a part of London, more young families, who, at setting out in life, promise well, are made corrupt, and led into wretched and destructive habits, from the unhappy location of houses, which renders all attempts to keep them in a pure and comfortable condition ineffectual, than from any other single cause. Ineffectual efforts to keep things neat lead to neglect, neglect to filthy habits, and filthy habits to low and degraded vice. If such be the operation of a want of neatness in families, and we apprehend the justness of the remark will find support in instances which must have fallen within the knowledge of every attentive observer, are there not reasons to fear, that the same effects will follow the same course in school? There can be no doubt that, in many instances, a sense of propriety is destroyed, in more, greatly weakened, by the state of things in and about the houses of education. A disregard to this subject, too common among scholars, often settles down into a confirmed habit, and gradually spreads itself over the whole surface of action, and through life; the individual becomes less interesting in his appearance, *less* agreeable in his manners, less honorable in his conduct, and less moral and upright *in his principles.*

"Instructors should also guard against the bad influence upon the dispositions and manners of scholars, which the inconveniences they experience are apt to produce. The pain and uneasiness which a child experiences from an uncomfortable situation in school, he will very likely associate with his books and studies, or with the instructor and regulations of school; he may connect them with those who sit near him, and who may be just as uneasy as himself, and be ready to hate the whole and quarrel with all, because he feels pain, and cannot, or does not, rightly understand the occasion of it. The local situation of children in school has a most obvious bearing upon the conduct and temper. Place them a little out of the observation of the instructor, and they will play; put them where they are crowded, or sit with inconvenience, and they will quarrel. 'It has often been a subject of interest to me,' says one of the committee, 'when visiting schools, to observe the operations of local circumstances upon the mind and conduct of children; and the more I have observed, the more importance am I constrained to attach to these things. In one house where I have many times called, I do not recollect ever passing a half hour, without seeing contention among those placed in a particular part of the room, and play in another. I distinctly recollect the same thing in the seminary where I pursued my preparatory studies. It was as obvious in the lecture-room in college. In the seminary which I had the care of for some years, it was so apparent that I often changed the situation of those who were unfavorably placed, to prevent the feelings and conduct likely to be produced from settling down into confirmed habits. For permanent bad effects may, and have, in fact, grown out of these circumstances. Quarrels, also, which have sprung up between children, and which had no other legitimate cause, than their being placed together in school, on uncomfortable seats, have led to a state of unkind feelings, and unfriendly conduct through life. The influence has sometimes extended beyond the individuals; families and neighborhoods have been drawn into the contention; and, in not a few instances, whole districts thrown into disorder, only because at first some little twig of humanity had become restless and quarrelsome, in consequence of his uneasy position in school.'

"But if the effect be confined to the individual, yet it may be sufficiently unhappy. Suppose, from one of the causes above named, the child acquire a habit of loose and foolish playfulness, or of restless discontent—suppose he acquire a disrelish for schools, his book, or unkind feelings towards his instructor, or his fellows—will there not be much personal loss, and is there no danger of future consequences—Is there no danger that these feelings will go into future life, and the individual prove less comfortable to himself, and less comfortable to others? Youth is the season when the character is formed, and direction given to the feelings and the conduct. It is a matter of no small interest to the man himself, or those with whom he is to act in future life, that there be of a gentle and accommodating character.

"Since, therefore, for the construction of many of our schoolhouses, it is not possible for the scholars to be altogether free from suffering, it is a subject well worthy the special attention of instructers, carefully to guard against the consequences which it is like to produce upon their temper and conduct. This may be done, in some degree, by allowing the children occasionally to change their situation, to rise and stand up a few minutes; or, at convenient seasons, giving them a short additional recess. To remove, in some degree, the gloom and deformities of the house, and at the same time to draw off the attention from their bodily pains, scholars should be allowed to ornament it with greens and flowers, and other things of an innocent nature, attracting to the minds of youth. Agreeable objects originate agreeable feelings, and pleasant feelings lead to good conduct. We would also recommend to instructors to encourage the children, in places where there is the least prospect of security, to cultivate flower-borders upon the schoolhouse grounds; and certainly in boxes set in the house. Should it be objected, that their attention in this way is withdrawn from their books, we must reply, that we doubt the fact, and would in turn ask whether the feelings, the taste, and the understanding would not be most essentially improved by attention to the works of Nature, and efforts to bring to the highest perfection, those things which a wise Providence, who knows by what means the character of man is to be formed, has made beautiful to the eye. Our own feelings have often been hurt, and our views of expediency entirely crossed, when we have seen, as we have on many occasions, a handsome branch, or beautiful flower, or well-arranged nosegay, torn in a censorious and ruthless manner from the hand of a child, or the place where his love for ornament and beauty had placed it. We would encourage the children to make the room of confinement as pleasant to them, as they can consistently with other duties; and if at any time it be observed, that these things are gaining an undue influence over them, to check it as any other practice not evil in itself, but only in excess, should be corrected. It should be done in such a manner, that the child should be left free to en-

joy, as far as it is safe to enjoy, and feel too that he does it with the full approbation and good will of his instructer.

"There is one subject more to which we must be permitted to refer; one with which the morals of the young are intimately connected, one in which parents, instructers, and scholars should unite their efforts to produce a reform. There should be nothing in or about the schoolhouses, calculated to defile the mind, corrupt the heart, or excite unholy and forbidden appetites; yet, considering the various character of those brought together in our public schools, and considering also how inventive are corrupt minds, in exhibiting openly the defilement which reigns within, we do not know but we must expect that schoolhouses, as well as other public buildings, and even fences, will continue to bear occasional marks both of lust and profaneness. But we must confess, that the general apathy which apparently exists on this subject, does appear strange to us. It is an humbling fact, that in many of these houses, there are highly indecent, profane, and libidinous marks, images, and expressions, some of which are spread out in broad characters on the walls, where they unavoidably meet the eyes of all who come into the house, or, being on the outside, salute the traveller as he passes by, wounding the delicate and annoying the moral sensibilities of the heart; while there is still a much greater number, in smaller character, upon the tables and seats of the students, and even, in some instances, of the instructers, constantly before the eyes of those who happen to occupy them. How contaminating these must be, no one can be entirely insensible. And yet how unalarmed, or, if not entirely unalarmed, how little is the mind of the community directed to the subject, and how little effort put forth to stay this fountain of corruption. Such things ought not to be; they can, to a considerable extent, be prevented. The community are not, therefore, altogether clear in this matter.

"When we regard the deleterious effect which the want of accommodation and other imperfections, in and about these buildings, must have upon the growth, health, and perfectness of the bodily system, upon the mental and moral powers, upon the tender and delicate feelings of the heart, we must suppose there is as pressing a call for the direct interference of the wise and benevolent, to produce an improvement, as there is for the efforts of the Prison Discipline Society, or for many of the benevolent exertions of the day. And we do most solemnly and affectionately call upon all, according to their situation in life, to direct their attention to the subject; for the bodies, the minds, the hearts of the young and rising generation require this. It is a service due to the present and future generation. A service due to their bodies and souls."

I will now bring this long statement to a close by the enumeration of a few further particulars, which could not well be arranged under any of the preceding heads; *and shall omit such things only as no* CIVILIZED *people can ever forget.*

Where the expense can be afforded, every schoolhouse should be provided with a bell. If not the only mode, it is probably the best one for insuring punctuality; and the importance of punctuality can hardly be overstated, either as it regards the progress of the school collectively, or the habits of the individual pupils. If morals were to be divided into the greater and the less, the virtue of punctuality should be set down in the first class. Probably there are few districts, which would not obtain a full equivalent, every year, for the price of a bell, in the improved habits and increased progress of the children.

It is also very desirable to have a time-piece placed in some part of the school-room, where it can be seen by all the scholars. It is both encouragement and relief to them. It has an effect upon the pupils, just like that of mile-stones upon travellers. Men and children have a wonderful power of adapting themselves to circumstances; but, with all their flexibility, neither child nor man can ever adapt himself to a state of suspense or uncertainty. All the large schools in the city of Lowell are provided with a clock, which strikes after stated intervals. This is a signal for classes to take their places for recitation, and for reciting classes to return to their seats.

Many schoolhouses in the country, are situated a hundred rods or more from any dwelling-house. In all cases it is desirable, but in such cases it seems almost indispensable, to have a pump or well, where water for drink and so forth can be obtained. In the summer, children usually require drink once in half a day. A hundred rods is too far for them to run in a brief intermission, or for water conveniently to be carried;—to say nothing of the inconvenience to a neighbor of having his premises invaded year after year, and, perhaps, his gardens and fruit-trees thereby subjected to petty depredations.

No children or teacher ought ever to be blamed for having a mud-plastered floor, if mats and scrapers are not placed at the doors of the house.

If there be not a cellar for wood when that species of fuel is used, a shed in which to house it is indispensable.

In the year 1831, the censors of the American Institute of Instruction submitmitted to that body a "Plan of a Village Schoolhouse." As the object of this Report is, not so much to present a model for universal adoption, as to explain the great principles which should be observed, whatever model may be selected; I have thought it might be acceptable to accompany this Report with the 'Plan' which was submitted by the censors as above stated, together with all the material parts of their explanation of it. They are therefore appended. [See the 2d volume of the Lectures of the American Institute of Instruction, p. 285, et seq.]

It will be perceived, that the 'Plan' of the censors exhibits a Doric portion in front of the house. Such an ornament would be highly creditable to the district, which should supply it. It would be a visible and enduring manifestation of the interest they felt in the education of their children. And what citizen of Massachusetts would not feel an ingenuous and honorable pride, if, in whatever direction he should have occasion to travel through the State, he could go upon no highway, nor towards any point of the compass, without seeing, after every interval of three or four miles, a beautiful temple, planned according to some tasteful model in architecture, dedicated to the noble purpose of improving the rising generation, and bearing evidence, in all its outward aspects and circumstances, of fulfilling the sacred object of its erection? What external appearance could impress strangers from other States or Countries, as they passed through our borders, with such high and demonstrative proofs, that they were in the midst of a people, who, by forecasting the truest welfare of their children, meant nobly to seek for honor in the character of their posterity, rather than meanly to be satisfied with that of their ancestors? And how different would be the feelings of all the children towards the schools, and through the schools towards all other means of elevation and improvement, if, from their earliest days of observation, they were accustomed always to look at the schoolhouse, and to hear it spoken of, as among the most attractive objects in the neighborhood!

In the preceding remarks, I have suggested defects in the construction of our schoolhouses only for the purpose of more specifically pointing out improvements. I would not be understood as detracting from, but as attesting to, their usefulness, as they are. Although often injudiciously located, unsightly without, and uncomfortable within, yet, more than any thing else, they tend to convert the hope of the philanthropist into faith, and they fill him with a gratification a thousand times nobler and more rational than the sight of all the palaces in the Old World.

HORACE MANN,

*Secretary of the Board of Education.*

Boston, March 28, 1837.

(A.)

*Letter from* DR. SAMUEL B. WOODWARD, *Superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester.*

*Worcester, March* 14, 1838.

HON. HORACE MANN, *Secretary of the Board of Education:*

DEAR SIR:—Your note and queries, respecting the construction of schoolhouses, came to hand yesterday; I improve the earliest opportunity to reply.

*First*, as to the ill effects of high and narrow benches, and seats without backs.

*High* and *narrow* seats are not only extremely uncomfortable for the young scholar, tending constantly to make him restless and noisy, disturbing his temper, and preventing his attention to his books, but they also have a direct tendency to produce deformity of the limbs.

If the seat is too narrow, half the thigh only rests upon it; if too high, the feet cannot reach the floor: the consequence is, that the limbs are suspended on the centre of the thigh. Now, as the limbs of children are pliable or flexible, they are easily made to grow out of shape, and become crooked, by such an awkward and unnatural position.

Seats without backs, have an equally unfavorable influence upon the spinal column. If no rest is afforded the backs of children while seated, they almost necessarily assume a bent and crooked position; such a position, often assumed, or long continued, tends to that deformity, which has become extremely common with children in modern times—and leads to disease of the spine in innumerable instances, especially with delicate female children.

The seats in school-rooms should be so constructed that the whole thigh can rest upon them, and at the same time the foot stand firmly upon the floor; all seats should have backs high enough to reach the shoulder-blades; low backs, although better than none, are far less easy and useful than high ones, and will not prevent pain and uneasiness after sitting a considerable time. Young children should be permitted to change their position often, to stand on their feet, to march, and visit the play-ground. One hour is as long as any child, under ten years of age, should be confined at once; and four hours as long as he should be confined to his seat in one day.

*Second Query*—"What general effects will be produced upon the health of children by stinting their supply of fresh air, through defects in ventilation?"

An answer to this query, will involve some chemical principles, in connection with the animal economy, not extensively and fully understood.

The blood as it circulates through the vessels in our bodies, accumulates a deleterious principle called CARBON, which is a poison itself, and must be discharged frequently, or it becomes dangerous to life. In the process of respiration or breathing, this poisonous principle unites in the lungs with a proportion of the oxygen of the air, and forms *carbonic acid*, which is expelled from the lungs at each expiration. The proportion of oxygen in the air received into the lungs, is about twenty-one in the hundred; in the air expelled, about eighteen in the hundred;—the proportion of carbonic acid in the inhaled air is one part in the hundred, in the exhaled air about four parts in the hundred. By respiration, an adult person spoils, or renders unfit for this vital process, about one gallon of air in a minute. By this great consumption of pure air in a school-room, made tight and filled with scholars, it will be easily seen that the whole air will soon be rendered impure, and unfit for the purpose for which it is designed. If we continue to inhale this contaminated air, rendered constantly worse the longer we are confined in it, this process in the lungs will not be performed in a perfect manner; the carbon will not all escape from the blood, but will be circulated to the brain, and produce its deleterious effects upon that organ, to which it is a poison. If no opportunity be afforded for its regular escape, death will take place in a few minutes, as in strangulation by a cord, drowning, and immersion in irrespirable air. The cause of death, is the retention and circulation of this poisonous principle, in all these cases.

If a smaller portion is allowed to circulate through the vessels than will prove fatal, it produces stupor, syncope, and other dangerous effects upon the brain and nerves. In still less quantity, it produces dulness, sleepiness, and incapacitates us for all mental efforts and physical activity. The dulness of a school, after having been long in session in a close room, and of a congregation, during a protracted religious service, are often attributable to this cause *mainly*, if not *solely*. Both teacher and scholar, preacher and hearer, are often greatly affected in this way, without being at all sensible of the cause. Fifty scholars will very soon contaminate the air of a school-room at the rate of a gallon a minute.

Suppose a school-room to be thirty feet square and nine feet high, it will contain 18,996,000 cubic inches of atmospheric air. According to Davy and Thompson, two accurate and scientific chemists, one individual respires and contaminates 6500 cubic inches of air in a minute. Fifty scholars will respire 325,000 cubic inches in the same time. In about forty minutes, all the air of such a room will have become contaminated, if fresh supplies are not provided. The quantity of carbonic acid produced by the respiration of fifty scholars, will be about 750 cubic inches in an hour.

From these calculations, we must see how soon the air of a school-room becomes unfit to sustain the animal powers, and how unfavorable to vigorous mental effort such a contaminated atmosphere *must prove to be*. To avoid this most serious evil, is a desideratum, which has not yet been *reached in the construction of schoolhouses.*

In my opinion, every house and room which is closed for any considerable time upon a concourse of people, should be warmed by pure air from out of doors, heated by furnaces placed in a cellar, (and every schoolhouse should have a cellar,) or in some contiguous apartment, so that the supply of air for the fire should not be from the school-room. Furnaces for warming external air, may be constructed cheaply, so as effectually to answer the purposes of warmth and ventilation.

When a quantity of fresh air is forced into a school-room by means of a furnace, the foul air is forced out at every crevice, and at the ventilating passages; the currents are all warm quite to these passages.

But if the room is warmed by a stove or fireplace, the cold air from without rushes in at every passage and every crevice, and while the parts of the body nearest the fire are too warm, the currents of cold air rushing to the fire to sustain the combustion, keep all the other parts cold and uncomfortable. This is a most direct way to produce disease; nothing can affect the system more unfavorably than currents of cold air coming upon us when quite warm.

I have said that schoolhouses should have cellars under them. The floor of a building without a cellar is always cold, and often damp; this tends to keep the feet of scholars cold, while the head, in a region of air much warmer, will be kept hot. This is both unnatural and unhealthful. The feet should always be kept warm and the head cool. No person can enjoy good health whose feet are habitually cold. In school-rooms heated by stoves, the feet are very liable to be cold, while the upper stratum of air, kept hot and dry by a long reach of pipe, produces a very unpleasant and unfavorable state of the head—headache, vertigo, and syncope often take place in such a room.

The human body is so constituted, that it can bear almost any degree of heat or cold, if the change be not too sudden, and all parts of it be subjected to it alike. We find no particular inconvenience from respiring air at the temperature of ninety degrees on the one hand, or at zero on the other; but inequalities of temperature, at the same time, affect us very differently, and can never be suffered for a long time without danger.

There is one consideration in the preparation of furnaces for warming rooms, that should not be overlooked. The object should be to force into the room a large quantity of air heated a few degrees above the temperature required, rather than a small quantity at a much higher temperature. The air chamber should be capacious, and the passages free. The air should always be taken from out of doors, and never from a cellar. The air of a cellar is often impure itself, and, if pure, a cellar that is at all tight cannot furnish an adequate supply. The whole air of a school-room should be changed at least every hour; if oftener, it would be better. If a cellar is not much larger than the room above it, this supply will soon be exhausted also. The air of the cellar may be sufficient to supply the combustion of the fuel; this is all it should do—and for this purpose it is better than air from out of doors, as the coldness of this checks the heat, and diminishes the temperature of the fire, and its power of heating the furnace.

In giving my views on this subject, I have been so desultory as to embrace nearly all that I can say on the other queries proposed to me. At any rate, my letter is already of an unreasonable length, and I must come to a close. Wishing you every success in the arduous duties of your present station, I remain truly and affectionately yours,

S. B. WOODWARD.

(B.)

*Extract of a Letter from* BENJAMIN SILLIMAN, *Professor of Chemistry in Yale College, in reply to an inquiry similar to the* SECOND *proposed to Dr. Woodward.*—*See p.* 206.

Of our atmosphere, only one fifth part, by volume, is fitted to sustain life. That portion is oxygen gas; the remaining four-fifths being azote or nitrogen gas, which, when breathed alone, kills by suffocation. The withdrawing of the oxygen gas, by respiration or otherwise, destroys the power of the atmosphere to sustain life, and this alone furnishes a decisive reason, why fresh air must be constantly supplied, in order to support animal life. But this is not all. Every contact of the air with the lungs, generates in the human subject from six to eight per cent. of carbonic acid gas—the same gas that often destroys the lives of people who descend, incautiously, into wells, or who remain in close rooms, with a charcoal fire not under a flue. This gas—the carbonic acid—kills, it is true, by suffocation, as azote does, and as water acts in drowning. But this is not all. It acts *positively*, with a peculiar and malignant energy, upon the vital powers, which, even when life is not instantly destroyed, it prostrates or paralyzes, probably through the nervous system.

I find by numerous trials made with my own lungs, that a confined portion of air,—sufficient, however, to fill the lungs perfectly with a full inspiration,—is so contaminated by a single contact, that a candle will scarcely burn in it at all; and, after three contacts, the candle will then go out, and an animal would die in it as quickly as if immersed in azote, or even in water.

It is evident, therefore, that a constant renewal of the air is indispensable to safety as regards life, and no person can be compelled to breathe, again and again, the same portions of air, without manifest injury to health, and, it may be, danger to life.

It follows, then, that the air of apartments, and especially of those occupied by many persons at once, ought to be thrown off by a free ventilation; and, when blown from the lungs, the same air ought not to be again inhaled, until it has been purified from the carbonic acid gas, and its due proportion of oxygen gas restored. This is effected by the upper surface of the green leaves of trees and plants, when acted upon by the direct solar rays. The carbonic acid gas is then decomposed, the carbon is absorbed to sustain, in part, the life of the plant, by affording it one element of its food, while the oxygen gas is liberated and restored to the atmosphere.

(C.)

*Extract of a Letter from* DR. SAMUEL G. HOWE, *Director of the Institution for the Education of the Blind, in Pearl Street, Boston.—See p.* 290.

I take it for granted, that the existence of blindness, in the human race, like every other physical infirmity, is the consequence of departure from the natural laws of God; that the proportion of blind persons in every community is dependant upon the comparative degree of violation of the natural laws; and that scientific observation can in almost every case point to the kind and degree of violation.

Imperfect vision, partial and total blindness, are more common among men than animals, and in civilized than in savage or barbarous nations. It seems to be well ascertained, that blindness is more common as we approach the equator; and that on the same parallel it is more frequent in dry sandy soils, than in humid ones.

It is supposed by some, that in very high latitudes blindness is more frequent than in the temperate zones, on account of the strong reflection of the sun's rays by the snow; but besides that we have no statistical returns to confirm this opinion, there are other causes which make it doubtful; the solar rays are much less powerful, the days are short, and the tendency to local or general inflammations and congestions of blood, is much less in cold than in warm climates. Without, however, dwelling upon general rules, I will come at once to causes operating in our own climate.

Any one who has reflected that man was created with a perfect physical organization—that his eye, the noblest organ of sense, was fitted to reach to a distant star, or to examine the texture of the gossamer's web, will be struck by the fact that every tenth man he meets is either near-sighted, or far-sighted, or weak-eyed, or has some affection or other of the vision. Now, the frequency of this departure from the natural state of the vision, is not a fortuitous circumstance; if there were but a single case, it must be referrible to a particular cause; and, *a fortiori*, when it prevails in every section of the country, and in every generation. Let us consider the greatest derangement of vision—blindness: there are very few cases, where the eye is totally insensible to light; let us call every person blind, whose organ of vision is so permanently deranged, that he cannot distinguish the nails upon his fingers; for many persons can see how many fingers are held up between the eye and a strong light, who cannot see the nails. Of persons blind to this degree, and of those totally blind, there are about one in two thousand in the United States. This calculation is warranted by statistical returns, which are liable to error, only in putting down too few.

Of these six thousand five hundred persons, but very few lose their vision by wounds, injuries, or acute inflammation; the great majority are blind in consequence of violation of the natural laws, either by themselves or their parents; for I hold it to be indisputable, that almost every case of congenital blindness, is the penalty paid by the sufferer for the fault of the parent or progenitor. The number of cases of hereditary blindness, and of hereditary tendency to diseases of the eye, which have come under my observation, have established this beyond all doubt in my own mind.

I have known many cases, where a parent, with defective vision, has had half his children blind; and one case, where both parents had defective vision, and all their children, *seven in number*, were blind.

There are, then, causes at work in our own community, which destroy the vision of one two-thousandth part of our population, and impair the vision of a much greater part; and although each individual thinks himself secure, and attributes the blindness, or defective vision of his neighbor, to some accidental or peculiar circumstance, from which *he* himself enjoys immunity, yet the *cause* will certainly have its *effect*; the violation of the natural laws must have their penalty and their victim—as a ball shot into a dense crowd, must hit somebody. It is incumbent, then, upon each one, in his individual capacity, to avoid the remote and predisposing, as well as the immediate causes of impaired vision; and it is incumbent on those, who have an influence upon the condition and regulations of society, to use that influence for the same end.

It would lead to tedious details, to consider the various modes in which each individual or each parent should guard against the impairment of vision; but there are some obvious dangers to which children are exposed in schools, which may be pointed out in a few words.

You will often see a class of children reading or writing with the sun shining on their books, or writing in a dark afternoon with their backs to the window, and their bodies obstructing its little light; and if you tell the master he is perilling the eyesight of his scholars, he thinks he gives you a complete discomfiture, by saying, that he has kept school so for ten years, and never knew a boy to become blind; nevertheless, it is a cause of evil, and so surely as it exists it will be followed by its effect.

A boy reading by twilight, or by the blaze of a fire, or by moonlight even, will tell you he does not feel the effects; nevertheless, they follow as closely as the shadow upon the substance; and if, ten years afterwards, you see the boy selecting glasses at an optician's, and ask him what caused his imperfect vision, he will tell you that there was no *particular* cause; that is, the amount of evil done at any particular time, was not perceptible—as a toper, whose system is tottering to ruin, cannot believe that any *particular* glass of brandy ever did him any harm.

We should never read but in the erect posture; we should never read when the arterial system is in a state of high action; we should never read with too much or too little light; we should never read with a dazzling light of the sun, or fire, striking on our face.

Schoolrooms should be arranged in such a manner, that the light of the sun can be admitted in the right direction—not dazzling the eye, but striking upon the books; there should be facilities for admitting the light fully in dark weather, and for excluding it partly when the sun shines brilliantly.

I believe an attention to the physiology and laws of vision, by parents and instructors, would be of great benefit to children, and diminish the number of opticians; for as surely as a stone thrown up will come down, so surely does exposure to causes of evil, bring the evil, at some time, *in some way, upon* somebody. Truly yours,

SAMUEL G. HOWE.

*HORACE MANN, Esq, Secretary of the Board of Education.*

SEVENTH

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

# VERMONT BOARD OF EDUCATION,

WITH THE

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

MADE TO THE BOARD,

**September, 1863.**

BURLINGTON:
TIMES BOOK AND JOB PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT.
1863.

# REPORT

## OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

*To the Honorable the Legislature of the State of Vermont:*

GENTLEMEN :—

The Board of Education hereby submit their Seventh Annual Report.

The account of their "official doings" since the last report needs to occupy your attention for only a brief space. By an act of the Legislature of 1862, it was made the duty of the Board, at its then next session, to select some suitable book or books, to be used in the district schools of the State as text-books of the geography and history of Vermont. In obedience to that law, the Board, at its session at Middlebury on the 18th of February, 1863, selected provisionally a work by the Rev. Samuel R. Hall, then in manuscript, which, when perfected in accordance with recommendations of the Board, will, it is believed, well answer the purpose of such text-book.

In connection with this topic, the Board cannot forbear to express their great gratification that the Legislature has made provision for special instruction in the geography and history of our own State. The almost total want of such instruction hitherto, has left the children of the State destitute of a species of knowledge, not only important and interesting in itself, but indispensable to the right performance of their future duties as citizens of Vermont. It is ardently to be hoped that when the selected text-book shall be ready for use it will be introduced as extensively and used as generally as the spelling-book, the arithmetic, or any other text-book in the elements of knowledge.

For a detailed account of "the state and condition of the schools," reference is made to the full Report of the Secretary herewith submitted. It presents cheering evidence that our common school system is steadily gaining in popularity, increasing in efficiency, and proving itself competent to accomplish all that can reasonably be expected of a system. The practical administration of the system is mainly in the hands of the Secretary, and the Board have entire reason to be satisfied with the zeal, energy and discretion with which he has discharged the duties of his responsible position.

Early in the existence of the Board, the Secretary was instructed "to take particular pains to effect a more general acquaintance with the laws on the subject of our common schools." In compliance with these instructions he has recently prepared a complete digest of the statutes now in force, and of decisions of the Supreme Court construing these statutes, which, with a copious index and numerous practical forms, are appended to his Report. The conscientious fidelity and painstaking with which this has been done give assurance of the accuracy of the work, and the Board cannot but regard it a most valuable assistant to legislators, superintendents, district officers, and all others who have occasion to know precisely what is the law in regard to common schools.

The statute makes it the duty of the Board "to recommend to the Legislature, from time to time, such alterations, revisions, or amendments of existing laws relating to common schools as in their judgment are demanded in order to the perfecting of a system of general education in the State." Under this requirement the Board feel constrained to call the attention of the Legislature to a serious defect in the law; a defect so serious, indeed, that, in the judgment of the Board, an omission to repair it will leave the law in a state of comparative wothlessness. This defect did not exist in the law as originally enacted, but was occasioned by the general revision of the statutes last year. Its injurious consequences have, therefore, as yet made themselves apparent only to a limited degree, and it is to be hoped that a timely restoration of the law to its former state will prevent the mischief that must otherwise ensue.

The law as originally enacted, and remaining in full force till August 1st, 1863, required the Secretary of the Board to hold

one or more Teachers' Institutes annually in each County, authorized him to employ such assistance as might be necessary to give them efficiency and interest, and appropriated not exceeding thirty dollars a year to each County to defray the expenses. In the general revision of the statutes, the clauses authorizing the employment of assistants and making the needful appropriation were omitted. The practical effect of this withholding the appropriation can only be to deprive the Institutes of so much "efficiency and interest" as can be given to them by a judicious expenditure of the sum appropriated. While this would leave the Institutes in existence and capable of rendering some valuable aid to the cause of common school education, it would so greatly diminish their usefulness as to render it a serious question whether their absolute discontinuance might not be advisable. In view of such an injurious contingency the Board earnestly recommend the restoration of the law to its original state.

The importance of the subject justifies, and even demands, a somewhat full exposition of the benefits rendered by Teachers' Institutes to the cause of education. Teachers' Institutes are schools for instruction in the art of teaching. They are conducted by persons whose large experience in teaching and thorough familiarity both with the science and the art of instructing qualify them to give reliable information and advice concerning that subject. They are attended by persons who are engaged or expect to be engaged as common school teachers. Their objects are to give correct views of the methods of teaching, to impart greater readiness and skill in the prosecution of those methods, and, more important still, to kindle that generous enthusiasm for the teacher's work and hearty devotion to it, without which it can be no better than dull, dreary, monotonous task-work, vexatious to the teacher and worse than profitless to the pupils. They are the connecting link between the Normal school and the Teachers' Association, partaking of the advantages of both, and, with them, constituting a sufficient and well adjusted system of organization for the improvement of teachers. They secure for teachers the advantages of intercourse and sympathy, and afford them the opportunity for a comparison of views and interchange of experiences.

This statement of the objects which Teachers' Institutes seek to accomplish furnishes most cogent reasons why they should be

maintained and their capacity for usefulness increased to the utmost. Good teachers are indispensable to good schools. But good teachers are not a spontaneous production of nature, except in her most genial moods and at rare intervals. In the great majority of cases they are the result of experience and cultivation. They become skillful in their profession by dint of long practice, and after many failures or partial successes. In no particular are the deficiencies of teachers as a class more obvious, or the consequences of deficiency more deplorable, than in the practical art of teaching. Many a one, thoroughly taught in the branches of a common school education, and capable of enduring the most rigid examination by the Superintendent, utterly fails in the school room for lack of practical skill in teaching and governing. He has never been taught how to teach, and this important part of his profession he has yet to learn, and to learn at the expense of his employers. In this emergency the Teachers' Institute comes to his aid and theirs. It puts at his disposal the experience of those older in the profession than himself, it sheds light upon the untried path in which he is walking, enabling him to see the way of safety and to avoid the dangerous courses in which others have suffered injury. Such an agency as this surely deserves to be treated otherwise than with despite and rejection.

The history of Teachers' Institutes in our own State and elsewhere fully justifies what has been said of their value. They were not a new thing when first established in Vermont. For many years previous they had been in existence in New York and Massachusetts, where they had received liberal pecuniary assistance from Legislatures, and a hearty moral support from the people, and had rendered important aid to thousands of teachers. The observation of their good results in these States led to the introduction of them into this State. Here their usefulness has been similar in kind, if not equal in degree. It is the almost unanimous testimony of teachers, superintendents, and others best qualified to judge, that they have been among the most efficient agencies in the improvement of teachers and in the general advancement of common schools. If they have been less extensively useful here than elsewhere, it must be attributed mainly to the very small expenditures by which they have been sustained. The State of Massachusetts expends more money upon a single Institute continuing in session five days, than the State of Vermont has ever expended upon fourteen Institutes continuing in session seven weeks. But notwithstanding

the smallness of the expense our Institutes have gained great favor with the public, have secured a high appreciation from teachers, and have conferred priceless benefits upon the cause of education.

The views now advanced are those which are entertained by the most experienced educators and friends of common schools throughout the country; and the Board take occasion here to cite a few of the opinions expressed by eminent men in other States. Hon. Henry Barnard, of Connecticut, who has labored longer and had larger experience in efforts to advance the cause of popular education than any other living American, gives the following most emphatic testimony to the value of Teachers' Institutes:

"The Teachers' Institute so appointed, organized and conducted, "as to exclude professional jealousy, and at the same time enlist the "co-operation and attendance of school officers and parents, and by "the almost universal practice of welcoming Teachers to the hospi- "talities of the place where the Institute is held, and assigning to "the evening lectures and discussions all topics of general interest, "has proved an educational revival agency of the most extensive, "permanent and unobjectionable character.

"During nearly a quarter of a century's study and observation of "schools, school systems, and educational agencies, in different States "and countries, I have tried, seen or read of nothing so universally "applicable or so efficient in awakening and directing rightly both "professional and parental interest in the broad field of popular edu- "cation, as a well attended and wisely conducted Teachers' Institute. "A single educational lecture or address, or a convention in which "a number of addresses are delivered, may occasionally move a "sluggish community into sudden and vigorous action, but gener- "ally it is only after years of effort, by a few individuals, against all "sorts of obstacles, that a good school house is built, a proper clas- "sification of studies secured, and well qualified teachers employed "and adequately paid, in schools of different grades. But I cannot "recall a town where I ever held a well conducted Institute, where "the teachers were distributed through all the principal families, and "the evenings were devoted to public addresses and discussions on "topics connected with the organization and administration of the "school system, and the classification, instruction, and discipline of "public schools, where the work of educational improvement did not "at once begin, and begin too where all improvement in the educa- "tion of children must begin, in the heads and hearts of parents, in "the enthusiasm, enlarged knowledge and practical skill of teachers,

"and in the well considered and liberal action of school officers and "the public generally.

"Permanent associations of teachers, for mutual improvement and "advancement of their profession, have accomplished much good, "and may be made still more widely beneficial, and should receive "the aid and countenance, not only of teachers but of the legisla- "ture and the people. But a well arranged and judiciously conduc- "ted series of Institutes, will, in a single year, without wasting "time in forming and amending constitutions, or election of officers, "and discussing questions of order, or places of meeting, and avoid- "ing all occasions of jealousy on charges of exclusiveness, reach a "larger number of teachers, secure a more thorough and systematic "presentation and discussion of the principles and method of teach- "ing and discipline, exposing and exploding those which are obsolete "and defective, and explaining and commending those which are "new and valuable, awaken more professional spirit, and form and "strengthen more bonds of connection between the older and young- "er teachers, than all the State, County and Town associations, act- "ing together, with meetings extending over only one or two days, "can do in many years.

"A well equipped Normal School, or Institution for the special "training of teachers, modified to suit the peculiar circumstances of "the State, and the present condition of the schools, is unqueston- "ably the most direct and efficient instrumentality for thoroughly "educating and training young men, and young women, for the work "of teaching; and if in its practical operations, the staff of profes- "sors could be so numerous, and of the peculiar qualifications re- "quired, as to conduct the County Institute, examine in connection "with a County school officer, all candidates for teaching, and with "your Board, all Normal classes participating in the funds which "you administer—such a Normal school, organized in connection "with other parts of the school system, and other agencies for the "professional improvement of teachers; would be an unmixed bless- "ing to the State, and improve at once, and largely, both the quali- "ty and quantity of instruction given in the public schools.

"But in the present state of popular feeling, and wide spread "financial embarrassment, such a Normal school cannot be looked "for; and even if it could be established at once, the Teachers' "Institute, under your general direction, and the educational lec- "ture, in connection with the operations of the Superintendent of "public instruction, can do more to create a demand for, and appre- "ciation of the services of well qualified teachers, and at the same "time, in connection with the State University, the Colleges, Acade- "mies and High Schools, contribute more largely to the better quali-

"fication of such teachers as the districts will employ for the present "to teach their schools, than even such an institution, unless under "the favorable conditions above supposed. The men employed to "conduct Institutes and examine Normal classes, must be men of "Normal training and capable of giving Normal Instruction; and if "such men can be employed, they will constitute, if not a Normal "school, an itinerating Normal agency, which will, every year, be "felt directly in every county, and indirectly, through the teachers, "on a majority of the public schools and children of the State."

Hon. George N. Briggs, of Massachusetts, whose sound practical judgment and sturdy common sense were almost unerring, addressed the Legislature of that State upon the subject of Teachers' Institutes as follows:

"Within the last few months, a new element has been intro- "duced, calculated to awaken a new interest among instructors of "youth. I allude to Teachers' Institutes. At these meetings, "those persons who are, or who expect to be teachers, assemble "together and spend their time in taking lessons and hearing lec- "tures from experienced and accomplished masters, on those sub- "jects which are connected with school teaching. These meet- "ings have been for some time in operation in the State of New "York, and have been attended with signal success. For the "purpose of making the experiment here, a distinguished and "patriotic citizen of Boston, who a few years since gave $10,000 "to aid in the introduction of Normal Schools, with the same "spirit of liberality, offered $1000, for defraying the expenses of "the experiment. Under the direction and personal superin- "tendence of the enlightened and persevering Secretary of the "Board of Education, four Institutes were assembled in different "sections of the commonwealth. In every instance, the result "was most satisfactory and auspicious.

"I had the pleasure of witnessing the exercises and proceed- "ings of one of these interesting assemblages. The lessons and "lectures of those who conducted the Institute were in the high- "est degree interesting. The punctuality, attention, improvement, "and entire devotion to the great purpose for which they came "together, on the part of the members, were worthy of all praise. "I hope before another year, some plan may be matured, by which "all the teachers in the State may be able to participate in these "institutions. May not some legislative aid and encouragement "be given to a measure which looks entirely to the increased

"qualifications of teachers and the improvement of the common "schools? I commend this great subject, which involves the "character and destiny of the commonwealth, in all its branches, "and with all its interests to your wise deliberations."

This recommendation of Gov. Briggs met with such a cordial response from the Legislature, that a law appropriating twenty-five hundred dollars annually to defray the expenses of Teachers' Institutes, passed the house of Representatives with only five dissenting votes, and the Senate without a division. The system thus established has been steadily maintained, and within the last seventeen years the State of Massachusetts has expended nearly forty-four thousand dollars in the support of Institutes, to the great advancement of teachers and the marked improvement of common schools. They are now regarded in that State as a permanent agency in the common school system. Every attempt to discontinue them or to impair their agency is received with marked disfavor, both by the Legislature and by the people. Some of the most eminent scholars and statesmen in the State, including Presidents of nearly all the colleges, have borne witness to their value. Of the numerous testimonials so given, a few only can be quoted. Rev. Barnas Sears, D. D., now President of Brown University, says:—

"The success and efficiency of the Teachers' Institutes show "that they are capable of being rendered an instrument of greater "power than was supposed when provision for their establishment "was first made. If a public measure deserves increased sup-"port when its utility is demonstrated by accomplishing more than "was expected, and by revealing, in the course of its action, "greater facilities for usefulness, with a little expansion of the "system, then the history of these Institutes has shown, that of all "the modes of action that have been devised for advancing the "actual education of the people, none are superior to this. The "opinion once generally entertained that these will be needed "only as a temporary expedient, till the operation of the Normal "Schools shall be more generally felt, must be abandoned. They "are as much resorted to by the most skillful and experienced "teachers, as by any other class, and are as beneficial to "them as any others. Though their attendance may not be "absolutely necessary to enable them to perform their duties with "success, it does increase the measure of their success as much

"as it does that of any other class. If persons of good intellect "and of commanding influence can be stimulated and guided so "as to become more zealous and efficient, if the best among the "great body of teachers can be induced to make rapid strides "towards that eminence to which they ought always to aspire, "the value of that progress in them is not only as great as it "would be in others of a lower order of mind, but it is even "greater, because it carries with it the latter as a natural conse- "quence. It would be but of little use to work upon the weaker "intellects and upon the more ignorant mind, if there were to be "a stagnation in those who give the profession its character. But "if a high state of mental activity can be kept up in the whole "body, elevating those who are low in their attainments, and "carrying still higher those who are already highest, then a work "is accomplished whose influence will be universally felt by the "thousands who are receiving their training under this great com- "pany of teachers."

Hon. H. K. Oliver, in an able report to the Legislature of Massachusetts says:—"Of the practical utility of these Institutes, no candid mind, properly acquainted with their workings and results, can for a moment doubt." Hon. George S. Boutwell says:—"The value of the Institutes is well established by experience." Hon. Joseph White says:—"A well conducted Institute is adapted to suggest to teachers their deficiences, to awaken mental activity, to extend a professional spirit and kindle a generous emulation, as well as to solve difficulties and discuss methods and improvements. Now this is the kind of influence specially needed, influence as well as instruction, that mental stimulus which springs from social influence and sympathy, from a unity or rather a community of purpose, quickening and energizing the mind in the use of all available means of self improvement and professional culture. The pleasure and profit of acquaintance, the forming or strengthening of the ties that would bind all grades of teachers —the young and the experienced in closer fellowship, are among the incidental but not important results of these gatherings." In another connection the same gentleman says:—"But there is an interior and more vital aspect, that which relates to the formation and progress of that public opinion, which vitalizes and gives direction to all organization and movement, which has demanded more commodious school houses, better illustrative apparatus, improved text books, gradation in the schools; and a far more strict

and discriminating supervision of them, which has called for higher qualifications on the part of teachers, and has inspired them with a generous professional enthusiasm; which has led our youth to prize more highly and improve more assiduously their advantages; and which has taught our people to submit with alacrity to the increased taxation which the enlarged demands of the public school require, rather as a blessing than as a burden, from the full conviction that whatever sums are thus raised and honestly and judiciously expended, are a direct contribution to a higher public morality, to an enlarged skill and power of production, and to the general thrift and prosperity."

Quotations of a similar character from equally respectable sources might be multiplied to an almost indefinite amount. Enough, however, have been cited to show conclusively that where Teachers' Institutes have been most efficiently maintained they have commended themselves to the entire approbation of those who were best qualified to judge of their value as an agency for the improvement of teachers and of schools. In what estimation they are held by the people of Vermont is evident from the extracts from superintendents' reports appended to the report of the Secretary of the Board. With hardly a dissenting voice they testify that the Institutes are highly prized by teachers and popular with the people. The cordiality with which they have every where been received, the liberal hospitality that has been bestowed upon the members, and the urgency with which they have been invited again and again to meet in the same town where sessions have already been held, bears witness that the people heartily approve them and desire their continuance. The eager interest with which they have been attended by great numbers of teachers during the past year, notwithstanding the general absorption of thought, feeling, and action in the pending national struggle, shows that the need of them is increasingly felt and their usefulness highly appreciated. In fact, the need of them has been rendered not only more evident but more decided and imperative by the war. A multitude of teachers, a large part of whom were of the more experienced members of the profession, have left the service of the country in the school house to serve it on the battle-field. Many of them have already sacrificed their lives and others must need do so. Their places as teachers are occupied, and will continue to be, by the younger and less mature, and by those who are entirely new and inexperienced in the business of teaching. It is

almost inevitable that the standard of instruction will be lowered, the usefulness of our common schools greatly diminished, and much that has already been done for their improvement lost, unless efficient measures are adopted to educate the new corps of teachers up to the point which has been attained by their predecessors. In the judgment of the Board, no measures so efficient, and at the same time so economical, can be employed for that purpose as well conducted Teachers' Institutes, and good policy requires that their "efficiency and interest" be increased by larger appropriations judiciously expended, rather than diminished by the withdrawal of the small appropriation hitherto granted.

Commending this topic in particular, and the interests of common school education in general, to your wise and friendly consideration,

We remain, very respectfully,

FREDERICK HOLBROOK, *ex officio*,
PAUL DILLINGHAM, "
TIMOTHY P. REDFIELD,
HILAND HALL,
PLINY H. WHITE,

} Board of Education.

# SECRETARY'S REPORT.

# SECRETARY'S REPORT.

VERMONT BOARD OF EDUCATION,
SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SEPTEMBER, A. D., 1863.

By the law organizing the Board of Education, it is provided that the Secretary of the Board shall

"Prepare and present to the Board of Education, on the first day "of their annual session, a report of his official doings for the pre- "ceding year, and a statement of the condition of the common schools "in the State; of the expenditure of the school moneys therein, and "such suggestions for improving their organization and modes of in- "struction, together with such other information in regard to sys- "tems of school instruction in other States and Countries, as he shall "deem proper."

*To the Honorable Vermont Board of Education:*

Pursuant to the direction of law, I now present the Seventh Annual Report of this department.

## OFFICIAL DOINGS.

The Legislature of the State, at their last session, in making a general revision of the Statutes, effected various changes in the laws in regard to common schools. While some of the alterations are of great importance, there are many changes in regard to minor points; but an early knowledge of them all is indispensable to the thorough and intelligent discharge of the duties of the various school officials.

In view of the fact that, of necessity, the publication and distribution of the Revised Statutes, could be effected but a short time before the time appointed for them to take effect, and that, however general the distribution might be, it would require much time to inform all interested in our schools of the many changes in the school law, I deemed it best to insert the revised school law in the annual report for the present year.

A more intimate acquaintance, on the part of the people with the State school system can hardly fail to increase the general appreciation of its power for good when thoroughly understood and faithfully carried out. And it is patent to observation that a lack of intimate knowledge of our school laws is the cause of that general want of active interest on the part of communities, and of that laxness in the discharge of official duty, which, aggravated by the ill judged indulgence it has received, has derogated largely from the efficiency of our schools.

Actuated by all these considerations then, I have thought that I could do no better work than to make a knowledge of our school laws accessible to all. I have therefore embodied in the present report the School Law as revised, an abstract of the decisions of our Supreme Court upon questions arising out of the school law, and a complete set of school forms, adapted to the revised school law, each with a very full and complete index.

This work, which I deemed necessary and expedient, has occupied a good deal of time and it will take up a large portion of the Report; but I am entirely satisfied that thus, both time and labor are well bestowed and will be appreciated.

The regular duties prescribed by law, in regard to the general visitation of the State, the preparation and distribution of Registers, and the collection of statistics, have all been performed to the best of my ability.

In the general visitation of the State, special prominence was given to the topic of Graded Schools, in accordance with the instructions of the Board, whenever a discussion of that matter was deemed expedient, and the selection of towns for visitation was made somewhat with reference thereto.

The audiences gathered in different parts of the State were as large as usual generally, and in many instances the attendance was unusually full.

## TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

The first of the series of Teachers' Institutes for the year was held in Fairfield, in the County of Franklin, on the 4th and 5th days of November, 1862. The former Superintendent of Franklin had previously come to Burlington expressly to urge the location of an Institute in that town, and obtained a promise to that effect. But before the time for the Institute arrived, the Superintendent had removed from town and no one had been appointed to the vacancy, so that in the lack of any town official to co-operate with me, the Institute took the people of the town somewhat by surprise. The attendance here was not very large, not nearly as large as it would have been with more complete notice and co-operation.

But a good degree of interest seemed to be stirred up among the people. Rev. Messrs. Fay, of St. Albans, Perry, of Swanton, and Buckham, of Fairfield, were constant in attendance, and assisted in the Institute. Mr. Taylor, of St. Albans Graded School, and Mr. Mead, of the Graded School in Swanton, were present and contributed largely to the interest and usefulness of the session I am inclined to think that a wholesome influence resulted from the meeting.

The second Institute was held at Westford, in the County of Chittenden, on the 7th and 8th of November, 1862.

The known intelligence and thoughtfulness of the citizens of Westford induced the expectation of a cordial and appreciating reception,

and the expectation was very fully realized. The weather was unfavorable, but the attendance from the beginning was large. Rev. Messrs. Torrey and Pierce, of Westford, and Dunn, of Fairfax, were present during the session. Mr. Camp, of the Burlington High School, gave a very pleasant and unpretending but effective address on the practicability of introducing music into the public schools, which was well received by all. Rev. Mr. Torrey asked the attention of the Institute to the practicability and importance of phonography, in an off-hand and earnest lecture.

There was a large attendance of the teachers and superintendents of the County, and of the citizens of the vicinity, and nothing could exceed the warmth and cordiality with which all from abroad were welcomed by the citizens. The Institute at Westford was one of the most successful educational gatherings that has been held in this County.

The third Institute was held at Stowe, in the County of Lamoille, in the Town Hall, on the 11th and 12th of November, 1862. The attendance here was very fair, although not as large as it has sometimes been in this County. Rev. Messrs. Ford and Whitney, of Stowe, Bartlett of Morristown, and Bailey of Hydepark, and several of the Superintendents of the County were present.

The citizens of Stowe have recently manifested their own interest in popular education by the adoption of a system of public Graded Schools, which, under the able instruction of Mr. Leavens, seems to have given general satisfaction. They have erected upon a desirable site a very tasteful and convenient school house, for the accommodation of the Graded School, which on the evening of the last day of the Institute was filled with a throng of the friends of education, meeting the pupils and parents in a social levee.

The school house in its tasteful exterior, convenient arrangement and full equipment, is a pleasant monument of the liberality and wisdom of the inhabitants of the beautiful village of Stowe.

The session of the fourth of the series of Institutes began at East Calais, for the County of Washington, on the 14th of November, 1862.

The first day's session was not very fully attended, and was interrupted by the funeral of a deceased soldier, appointed in the same church, but the attendance during the evening of the first and the whole of the second day was very large. Mr. A. J. Sanborn, the Principal of South Hardwick Academy, and Superintendent of that town, was present with thirty-five of his older pupils, and assisted very acceptably in the discussion of Geography. The topic of Grammar was discussed by Mr. A. B. Corliss, of West Topsham, and the sessions were enlivened by excellent music from the choir, under direction of Mr. Bradish.

The Institute was quite successful and seemed to be very well received by many who never before had attended such a gathering.

The fifth Institute was held at Glover, in the County of Orleans, on the 18th and 19th of November, 1862.

The sessions were held in the Academy Hall, and although the weather was unfavorable, rain falling constantly during the second day, the attendance was very good. Mr. Corliss, of West Topsham, discussed the subject of English Grammar, and Mr. Todd, the Principal of the Glover Institute, occupied one evening in an address upon the subject of Reading.

The Rev. S. R. Hall, of Brownington, so well known as a pioneer in the cause of educational improvement, gave a most acceptable lecture upon the elements of Geology and Mineralogy.

A committee of reception had been previously appointed by the citizens, who faithfully carried out the hospitable intentions of the inhabitants in extending a cordial welcome to all from abroad ; and to them and the Rev. Mr. Perkins and Mr. Todd, of Glover, those in attendance were much indebted.

The sixth Institute began its session at Waterford, in the County of Caledonia, in the Congregational Church, on the 21st day of November, 1862. The Institute was located here at the urgent solicitation of citizens of the vicinity, and although the weather was exceedingly forbidding and rain fell almost constantly during the whole session, the attendance, both of citizens and teachers, was larger than could reasonably have been anticipated.

No gathering of a like kind had ever been held in this part of the County, and the very novelty of the Institute gave an additional attraction to its other claims ; and the thoughtful and close attention of large audiences completely vindicated the selection of the location.

The seventh Institute was held at Guildhall, in the County of Essex, on the 25th and 26th days of November, 1862, in the town hall. The attendance here was not as large as for several previous years in the same county when held at West Concord and Lunenburgh, but still it was very good.

Mr. Heywood, the Superintendent of the town, was active and efficient in furnishing every needed assistance, and the majority of the thoughtful and intelligent citizens were present.

Rev. Mr. Sewell and Mr. King, the Superintendent of Lunenburgh, were in attendance with the teachers from that town. And several of the friends of education from the vicinity in the State of New Hampshire; and by all the Institute seemed well received.

The eighth Institute was held at Grand Isle in the County of Grand Isle, on the 4th and 5th days of February, 1863. This time was chosen that advantage could be taken of the ice to facilitate access— but when the time appointed arrived it proved to be in the midst of the severest weather of the year. The thermometer stood at 28° below zero on the morning of the first day, and varied but little during the session, but notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather the sessions of the Institute were very largely attended by citizens

and teachers. The Institute seemed to be well received, and to leave a decidedly wholesome influence behind it.

The ninth Institute was held in the town hall in Bradford, in the County of Orange, on the 26th and 27th days of May, 1863. The Institutes in this county have been well attended for several years past, and the session at Bradford was no exception to the rule. The lateness of the season and the pressure of Spring's work prevented the presence of many men who would otherwise have attended in the day time, but upon the evening sessions the attendance was very large.

The Rev. Mr. Britton, the Superintendent, was in constant attendance, and likewise assisted in the discussions, and by his dispensation of the very liberal hospitality of the people, and his active interest, did very much to insure a successful meeting.

Mr. E. Conant of the Randolph Academy, discussed the important topics of Grammar and Geography with great ability, and to the acceptation of all. The session was well received, and may be considered a very successful one.

The tenth Institute was held in Wilmington, in the County of Windham, on the 29th and 30th days of May, 1863. This location was selected, although the Institute for this County in 1861 was held in the same place, in accordance with the cordial invitation of the citizens—and the event fully justified the selection.

From the first the attendance was large and the reception given was exceedingly cordial. A committee previously appointed for the purpose were constantly present to care for the wants of all present.

Rev. Addison Brown, long Superintendent of the town of Brattleboro, discussed the subject of Reading, and was assisted by Mr. B. F. Bingham, the Principal of the East Brattleboro High School. Mr. Orcutt, the Principal of Glenwood Ladies' Seminary, gave a very interesting and valuable address on the difficult topic of school discipline; the address gave rise to some little discussion and was more useful on that account.

I have seldom been favored with the assistance of so many able and practical teachers in any of our Institutes, and consider the Institute here, for the variety and ability of the discussions evoked, and for the cordial hospitality and kindness of its reception, to have been second to none that I have held in this county.

The eleventh Institute was held in the Baptist Church in North Bennington, in the County of Bennington, on the 2d and 3d days of June, A. D., 1863.

The attendance of teachers and citizens here was quite large, and the reception given to all present was very kind and hospitable.

Mr. Yates, the Principal of the Academy at Bennington Centre, discussed the subject of Arithmetic, and was present through most of the session. Mr. Knights, Principal of the Academy at North

Bennington, assisted in the exercises of the Institute, and was untiring in his efforts to minister to the wants of all—and the good success of the session was to a great degree owing to his active exertions.

The twelfth Institute was held at Weston, in the County of Windsor, on the 5th and 6th days of June, 1863. The Institute of the previous year for this County was held nearly at the northern extremity, and on that account it was deemed best to locate the one for the present year quite to the southern extremity, in order to distribute as much as possible the effect of the meetings.

Therefore, and in response to an urgent invitation to that effect, the Institute was held at Weston. The citizens of this thriving little mountain town have for many years sustained the reputation of having a deep interest in the means of education, and within the past year or two have erected a very beautiful and convenient school house, adapted to the accommodation of a graded system of schools. The building is an admirable one and cost more than $5000, and will while it stands bear unfailing testimony to the wisdom and liberality of the citizens.

As would reasonably be expected, by such a people any educational gathering would be gladly welcomed; and the Institute was thus received here. And the very large audiences gathered in this little town, perched, as it were, upon the mountains, strengthened the conviction that has long been growing in my own mind, that oftentimes the smaller mountain towns in our State have the larger proportion of thoughtful and earnest friends of education.

All present were hospitably entertained although the town was filled to overflowing. The attendance of teachers was unusually large. Mr. Hyde, Principal of the Black River Academy, in the town of Ludlow, was in attendance with some eighteen of the teachers of that town. Rev. Messrs. Coon, of Londonderry, and Archibald, of Mount Holly, assisted in the discussions with great earnestness and effect.

The thirteenth Institute was held in the Congregational Church in Wallingford, for the County of Rutland, on the 9th and 10th days of June, 1863. This was the largest Institute for the year, and one of the largest that has ever occurred in the State. Nothing could exceed the kindness and cordiality with which the members of the Institute were received, and the fact that more than three hundred members were received in the homes of the citizens, sufficiently evinces the extent to which demands were made upon the kindness and interest of the people.

Mr. Moore, Principal of the Union High School and Superintendent of Rutland, and some thirty of the Rutland teachers, were present. Mr. Winslow, of Pittsford, Mr. Henry Clark, of Poultney, were present and took part in the discussions. Excellent music, partly from a few of the pupils from the excellent school of Mr. Hitt, of Centre Rut-

land, and partly from the choir of the town, was instrumental in adding to the interest of the meeting. And, at the close, the Resolutions passed by the Institute, and the response by D. E. Nicholson, Esq., all indicated a successful and useful meeting. I cannot omit to express my own sense of obligation for the untiring care and attention of Mr. Congdon, the Town Superintendent. The Institute owes much of its success to him.

The fourteenth Institute was held in the Methodist Church at North Ferrisburgh, for the County of Addison, on the 12th and 13th days of June, 1863.

The location here was induced by the desire to bring the Institute within convenient access from several towns that had not often been largely represented in the Institute, and was partially successful in that direction. The attendance was fair, but not large, and contained a smaller than usual proportion of those actually engaged in teaching. But many of the substantial and influential citizens of the vicinity attended during the session, and it is believed that an increase of interest in the welfare of schools was produced.

## CONDITION OF THE SCHOOLS.

It is very difficult to fulfil the requirement of the law which enjoins upon the Secretary an annual "statement of the condition of the schools." Infinitely varied as is their character, and surrounded by various circumstances in the different localities, it is almost impossible to present in one view a satisfactory exhibit of their condition, or to comprehend in one statement a faithful showing of their excellencies, defects, and necessities.

My knowlege of the condition of the schools throughout the State is derived from the reports thereon from the Town Superintendents, from the statistical returns, and from personal knowledge obtained by actual visitation snd inspection.

I will therefore draw from these sources in the order in which they are named above, and ask attention to the following extracts from the reports of the local officers, made in response to a general invitation for the expression of opinion in regard to the condition and wants of the schools:

In only one district in town is any tax upon the scholar reported. It is getting to be the usage in all our districts to raise all the money on the Grand List. The growing uniformity in this respect shows conclusively a change in public sentiment in the right direction. It has long been my opinion that the highest efficiency of our schools requires that their support should be made a charge upon property, rather than upon the pupils. In no other way, indeed, can we hope to secure for them a liberal and adequate maintenance.

I copy some extracts from my last report to the town. No teacher has been employed the past year without a certificate of approval, and it is matter of congratulation that our Prudential Committees, and the several districts for which they act, unitedly manifest a determination to sustain the law in this respect—a law which as a safeguard against the employment of incompetent teachers is as important as any other on our statute book relating to common schools. To secure the full benefit of

the law requiring the examination of teachers, its *letter* should be observed—their examination should be *public*. I would earnestly urge upon our Prudential Committees the importance of requiring the teachers they employ, where it can consistently be done, to be present at the *public* examinations. We shall thus avoid applications from some would-be teachers, who hope that through the leniency of a Superintendent they may, in a *private* examination, secure approbation.

With the purpose of ascertaining the condition of the schools, I have visited each of them near its beginning, and near its close, and I am happy in being able to report to you, that I have never seen in most of them clearer proof of order, industry, good discipline and thorough instruction than during the past year. Teachers have, it is true, exhibited different degrees of capacity in government as well as instruction, but no one has failed as has sometimes been the case. All have acquitted themselves creditably.

There are, however, some evils in connection with our schools which ought to be corrected. Though I have alluded to them in former reports, I deem it my duty to bring them again before you, in hope that they may receive attention.

Among them are very frequent *absences* from school. If parents realized as they ought, the serious disadvantages to those thus absent, and to the schools with which they are connected, they would so arrange their affairs as never to call their children from school except in cases of unavoidable necessity. The saving of a little money, or the conveniences thus effected, are not an offset for the injury sustained by the scholar.

Another evil is *tardiness* in the morning, and another still *dismissal* before the close of school. Some of the Registers show sad deficiency in this respect. Though some such cases are unavoidable, there cannot be a doubt that the blame, in most cases, belongs more to parents than to their children.

I will briefly conclude my report by alluding to some particulars in reference to which we have already commenced reform. Strange as it may seem, in several of the districts, Prudential Committees have actually visited the schools the past year, and in some of them more than once—a fact which could not have been reported two years ago. The names of parents, too, both fathers and mothers, are in several cases entered in the Registers—a cheering indication of reform commenced. Let us be hopeful of progress.

Another cheering fact is the payment of increased wages in some of our smaller districts, thus securing the services of abler and better teachers. The result I have already alluded to in speaking of the condition of the schools. No greater mistake is made than to suppose that because a school is small in numbers, an indifferently qualified, low-priced, cheap teacher will answer. Such a school should have, if possible, a teacher of the best qualifications. True, such a teacher will cost more, but the value of his or her services is incomparably greater than the increased cost.—We have no district in Cornwall which is not able to sustain a well qualified teacher. We cannot, in a word, afford to employ any other.

The education usually acquired in the common school, is better acquired there than anywhere else. There may be those among us who would not mind the expense of supporting their children at Seminaries or high schools abroad, but these are not the schools in which to get a common school education. They commonly overlook and neglect these studies. They generally profess to be established for instruction in higher studies. The youth there, male or female, who goes to such seminaries with an imperfect elementary education, rarely makes up the deficiency. Such youth may acquire a smattering of higher studies, but their education is a structure without a foundation.

Let it be our concern so to cherish and improve our common schools that they shall be, as they may be, nurseries of sound and thorough instruction, in which may be obtained all the education needful for the common purposes of life. Then, shall the reputation of Cornwall, as the birth-place of honored and useful men and women, be sustained; then shall intelligence dwell in our midst, and those who go out from us shall do credit alike to themselves, to the town that gave them birth, and to our commonwealth.

LYMAN MATTHEWS, Cornwall.

The plan of supporting schools entirely upon the Grand List should, I think, be more generally adopted. The present school law works very well, and has a very good effect, although in my estimation there is some machinery connected with it that might profitably be dispensed with. Teachers have been quite accurate in keeping their Registers the past year.

I can do no better at the present time than to submit to you an extract from my report to the town.

Much is being said and done in the Green Mountain State to promote the interests of the cause of education. Enough, at least, to convince the most skeptical that the word education has a deep and earnest meaning. It is an old maxim, and one that has verified itself that competition is the life of business. Then let Vermont compete with her sister States, and let each town strive to outstrip its neighbor in urging the cause onward. Let us each and all arouse from our lethargy, and awake to a full and realizing sense of the noble work which is before us. Let even the small town of Granville show to the world that she can produce men and women who will in some future day step forth to fill places of trust and honor.

Let parents be more punctual in visiting their schools, and prove to their scholars by actions that they feel a deep interest in their work, and at the same time show to the teachers that they are co-laborers with them, and have an anxiety to bring about the great and desired results. Throw aside the old and superstitious idea that it is profitable to support cheap schools. Procure the best and most efficient teachers, and endeavor at all events to have the best of schools. By so doing our money is saved, while, when we support poor schools, our money is worse than thrown away, for we not only lose our money, but what is still worse, we are supporting an institution which corrupts the morals of our children, and has an evil influence upon the community at large.

While the war drums have been beating, and cannons loudly booming and belching forth destruction and death upon many a bloody battle-field the past year, it is an encouraging thought that amidst all the excitement which such a state of things has caused, the interests of education have not been neglected, but in the Northern States, in New England, in Vermont, schools and institutions for the diffusion of useful knowledge have been maintained. I say that this is a matter of encouragement and hope, for the reason that education, intelligence and freedom ever have been, and ever will be associated, and these are the main pillars on which rest civil and religious liberty. Education is truly and most perfectly developed, and its highest aims attained when it makes men good, honorable, great and wise. If this is correct, and I think none will deny it, what inducements, what incentives to action.—Then my friends, friends of education in Granville, and especially to parents I appeal, though having myself taken but light drafts from the great fountain of knowledge, let me urge you to be more thorough and energetic, more watchful and untiring in your efforts to promote the great interests of education, and give to your children all the advantages you can to aid them in acquiring that which will cause them to be respected and honored by the great and good, and qualified to act well their parts in all the social, civil and domestic relations of life.

WILLIAM T. BALL, Granville.

---

As regards the schools of the town for the past year, I think they have been fully equal to any previous year. So far as I have had any connection with them (having been appointed in September to fill the vacancy caused by the removal from town of the regularly elected Superintendent,) they have appeared well. The teachers have been faithful to their trust, and have shown a very laudable degree of ambition to maintain the character of their profession in the esteem in which it should be held, notwithstanding the apparent want of interest shown by the parents and guardians of the children. Of the 93 persons recorded as visiting the schools, I could only count eleven of them as having any direct interest in the schools. The remainder were friends of the teachers. This is not as it should be, in order to have good scholars. The next thing after securing a competent teacher is to show him that his patrons take an interest in his work. Let him feel that he is liable to receive a visit

from them at any time, and instead of being negligent and careless, he will be ready to receive them at all times. If an interest could be awakened in this direction, all other improvements would speedily follow. If the parents and guardians of each scholar in Vermont would visit the schools once each term, there would be no more need of complaining of the uncomfortable, inconvenient and unpleasant school houses scattered through Vermont.

W. G. PERRY, Leicester.

---

As you solicit remarks in regard to the school registers, I am happy to say that, with one or two exceptions, there has been some improvement on the past in the manner the registers have been kept. A school register is to a district or teacher what a day-book or ledger is to a business man, and without we can have our registers correctly kept by the teachers, we shall be like a ship at sea without any compass. I am glad to see that several valuable works for teachers are mentioned in the registers. This, in my opinion, is the best way that has ever been thought of to bring the like to the notice of our teachers, and I hope this practice may be continued from year to year. If we could have a part of those valuable works mentioned in the Registers well read by every teacher in Vermont, we should expect soon to find a great improvement in our teachers. I feel, myself, that he who will not subscribe for our Vermont School Journal is hardly worthy to be employed as a teacher in this State.

As regards Teachers' Institutes, so far as my own personal observation has extended during the past sixteen years, in which I have generally attended the Institutes held in this County, I have seen or read of nothing so universally applicable or efficient in awakening and directing rightly both professional and paternal interests in the broad field of popular education, as a well conducted Institute.

GEORGE SMITH, Middlebury.

---

I cannot speak as flatteringly of the state of the schools in this town as I could wish. The greatest difficulty with us is the poor state of the school houses. There has ever been a good degree of interest in our District schools among the people, and such interest, I am encouraged to hope, is not diminishing but increasing. One favorable symptom with us is, the people acknowledge their school houses to be bad, and express themselves favorably in regard to building better ones in their stead. Some of the districts, probably, would have moved in the matter before this, were it not for the war. But as there is much wealth in the town, and less embarrassment is realized from the war than was at first apprehended, it is hoped that better school houses will, ere long, take the place of at least some of our present ones, even though hostilities be protracted.

An Institute among us the present year, would, I think, have a good effect in this regard.

WARD BULLARD, New Haven.

---

I regret that in my report to the town meeting I was able to speak of the schools generally, in terms of only very moderate praise; and yet, I do not doubt that notwithstanding their imperfections, they are accomplishing an amount of good in the town sufficient abundant to compensate for the expense and care required to sustain them.

I suppose that we are to consider the fact that only one visit of a Prudential Committee is reported in all the schools in town, as evidence, with that exception, of their unbounded confidence in the capacity, skill, and faithfulness of the teachers whom they had employed. Otherwise, it would seem to indicate a degree of indifference to the condition of the schools which we ought not to suppose citizens capable of filling the office could feel, in relation to so important an interest of their children, of the town, and of the commonwealth.

CEPHAS H. KENT, Ripton.

Our schools during the present winter have been unusually good. There has been only one absolute failure, and only in two instances has there been any complaint on the part of parents or children. Judging from former reports there has been general improvement, although I am unable to state to how great an extent, as I have had no acquaintance with the town till within six months.

I think more interest has been taken in our schools than formerly. People begin to see that a well educated, healthy child is almost as valuable as a "full blood" sheep, and that there *are* really vital interests involved in the mental and moral training of youth. That they fully appreciate the value of an education, cannot be claimed, but the stirring events of the present are giving evidence of such a want of enlarged and liberal ideas among all classes of community, that attention is being turned somewhat from the accumulation of wealth to this great subject. This is evinced by the facts that the schools have been visited more frequently, scholars have been more punctual in their attendance, and districts, hardly large enough to make up a respectable number of pupils, have had one or two sessions during the year. All this is encouraging. Yet it only opens wider fields for labor and effort. The friends of education have still very much to do before our common school system can attain to any high degree of perfection. Our districts are large, and owing to the sparseness of population, our schools are very small. The distance many families are compelled to go, renders punctuality difficult, and in the winter season almost impossible. The foreign population have a strong foothold among us, and they constitute a majority. But it may be said, much to their praise, that they are not a whit behind the Yankees in talents or deportment. The general conduct of the pupils in our schools has been very good. There have been only few instances of corporal punishment during the winter, a fact which speaks much of the true condition of things, especially as our teachers have been so generally successful in government. Great improvement has been made in all the studies pursued. In a word, considering the circumstances, I think I may pronounce our winter session a decided success. But there are several obstacles to entire success in our schools, which are doubtless felt elsewhere as well as in this immediate vicinity. Our teachers, although they are for the most part faithful and earnest in their work, have not that liberal culture and that refinement of taste and character, which give them a proper adaptation for their position, and which render them unexceptionable models for their pupils. It matters little what is the state of advancement in their schools; they need to be ladies and gentlemen of large and liberal ideas, capable of understanding the great laws of thought, and of comprehending mind in all its various relations. Else they will fail in adapting themselves to the acquisitions and powers of those they instruct, and in calling forth and stimulating to action their faculties. We need more refinement. The want of this is one great fault in Vermont character. We can make money fast enough. We require more cultivation of character and feeling. But whence is this refinement to come save from the example and instruction of parent and teacher. Our teachers are not well paid. Other States and other sections of this State offer greater inducements than we, and consequently draw some of the most desirable and efficient. Here a man can earn as much, and frequently more on a farm or in a shop than in the school room. And, too, a teacher well paid will work better and accomplish more than one but poorly compensated. Our teachers feel the want of a thorough course of Normal instruction. Though they have a general aptitude for teaching, they know nothing of the better methods of instruction—those methods which the experience and study of years have only been able to devise. Few of them have attended our Institutes; if at all, to a very limited extent, and consequently all they know of their profession has been "picked up" everywhere and from all sources.

Our school houses are far from being what is needed. We have two or three good buildings, but the others are old, dreary and repulsive at the best. They were evidently made "to last," and it is to be feared that they will "last" too long. There are two or three stone edifices with windows about large enough for portholes for our modern cannon. In one house, where I found about thirty pupils, most of whom were studying written arithmetic; there was a blackboard 6 by 3. There is a single set of outline maps in town, but no globe. When shall these difficulties

be remedied? This is the question. Not certainly until our legislators do their duty, and make ample provisions for the education of the young; until parents take a deep interest in the training of their children, and will expend their wealth more liberally.

C. C. HARRIS, Shoreham.

---

The improvement which our schools have made during the past year is as much as could be expected when they emply so many different teachers in the several school districts for the short period of one year,—that is to have new teachers every term, when the old one can be kept by advancing the price a dollar or two per month.

I think it is too apt to be the case, that our common schools and a large majority of our higher schools and academies are under the care of changing teachers. In most of our common schools a change is made twice each year. Thus changes go on from term to term and year to year, and the bad consequences follow. And what are some of these consequences? Every new teacher has his own peculiar views and methods of instruction. As a consequence there can be no systematic study, no regular and well aranged course of instruction. Pupils are usually left to obey their own inclinations.

The small compensation offered is another reason for this instability. I have heard committees on inquiring for teachers reply, when asking what kind of a teacher they wanted,—one who will charge only a dollar per week and board among the scholars. There was no inquiry as to her character or qualifications. "but how much does she ask?" She knows enough to teach our school—it is small and backward. No greater mistake could be made than this,—an ignorant teacher for an ignorant school! Nothing can be more absurd. Employ ignorance to instruct ignorance. The more backward the school the more intelligent should be the teacher.

WM. D. WHITE. Starksboro.

---

At no time since my acquaintance with the public schools in this town, has the condition in all respects, in my opinion, been as good as at present. The committees in the several districts have been peculiarly fortunate in being able to procure competent teachers.

While the very important and fundamental departments of reading and spelling have received special attention, particularly during the progress of the winter schools—at the same time, the higher branches, such as geography, arithmetic, grammar, history and philosophy, have by no means been neglected. But commendable progress has been made in them all.

In all our schools there is a great deficiency of school books. A considerable portion of the pupils in some of the departments of study, are obliged to depend on others for the use of their books. This deficiency, there is reason to fear, is to be found in many of our public schools. It is a deficiency which should be speedily remedied. Every pupil should be furnished with books such as are needed and should have the control of them independently of others. Parents and guardians should look well to this matter, and see that the children committed to their care are supplied with all the books necessary for their improvement and progress in study.

For the encouragement both of teachers and pupils, our district schools should be frequently visited by parents and guardians interested in the schools. The registers in which it is expected that the names of visitors will be found written, show a great deficiency in this respect, from year to year in all our schools. This is not as it should be. Our public schools should be visited frequently; and teachers should be looked after more diligently by all those who are interested to promote the education of our children.

Too much cannot be said on the importance of procuring competent teachers for our public schools. Teachers should be sought after, who have not only a sound and thorough education as its respects the several branches of study to be

taught; but who have also good manners and morals. No others should be employed to teach children. Teachers but poorly qualified in these respects may indeed be obtained in great numbers, and for low wages. But depend upon it, the schools taught by them will be dear schools to the employers. Let school committees, in selecting their teachers, look carefully to this matter; and act accordingly; and let the inhabitants interested sustain them in such a cause, and our schools from year to year, will continue to rise higher and higher in importance and usefulness to the respective communities around them.

S. W. COZZENS, Weybridge.

---

Though the number of scholars in our schools is diminishing, there is a higher state of mental cultivation than was manifest a few years ago. The elements of the sciences are better taught and more clearly understood in our schools. There is more care in the selection of teachers, and less scruples about paying remunerative wages, and there is a disposition to induce the children of foreigners to attend the schools and see that they have suitable books furnished them. But there is a failure among us of parents to attend the schools of their children.

D. N. CASEY, Whiting.

---

Sir: I have had the pleasure of attending but one of your Teachers' Institutes. That one was in Arlington in 1861. I thought it just the thing, that, not only every teacher, but every man, woman and child ought to attend. Something of the kind is absolutely necessary in these exciting times, to remind us of our highest interests, A wise and virtuous people alone are fit for a free government. Our vast resources and mighty armies, will avail us but litttle, in sustaining our free institutions, if the rising generation be permitted to grow up in ignorance and vice. We want more well educated, *honest men*. Every American citizen, should be a man of strict integrity. In *such* hands and such alone, our country is safe. Such I apprehend were the views of ours fathers when they inserted in sec. 15, page 144 of compiled statutes, "And good behavior," as one of the branches to be taught in our schools. Good morals, good manners, good behavior, have they not been wofully neglected in our common schools for the past twenty years.

A. G. McKEE, Arlington.

---

The great drawback to any improvement in common schools is a most culpable want of interest in such schools among the community generally. If the Prudential Committee succeed in engaging a teacher who is willing to take charge of a school for wages but little more than those of common servants, the district is satisfied. The only interest manifested in common schools in many of the districts exhibits itself in efforts to have the schools conducted on a most economical plan in respect to wages, furniture, fuel, &c. One question is invariably put to each applicant,—what is your price, and the applicant who is the "most reasonable," is the most apt to be successful. Price, not qualification, determines the selection of teachers. The result is, able, experienced teachers are often underbid by young misses in their teens who wish to teach school for the novelty of the thing.

The causes of this indifference seem to be; 1st, in the "out districts," the schools are small and the children rather backward. A most incorrect idea therefore exists, that one teacher, in a school like this, is about as good as another; 2nd, in the village districts, the wealthier part of the community send their children to select and private schools, to avoid the contaminating influence of association with the rough, unmannerly children who are educated at the expense of the State. The designation "select" school commends it to those who wish to be respectable; and happily distinguishes it from the common school which is a sort of "omnium gatherum."

Some of the results of this indifference may be detected in the above report. But a few schools are supplied with the modern appliances of teaching. But the report

presents a more encouraging state of things than really exists. Some of the outline maps are unfit for use, being torn and soiled. In several school houses, a surface of blackboard wall battered by hard usage, and so effaced as to render it uncertain whether chalk or coal would make a more distinct line, enables the teacher to report so many feet of blackboard.

Two school houses in town are hardly fit to serve as stables for horses. The ventilation, however, by means of gaping cracks and broken window panes, is amply sufficient. Within a space of a few feet there is a very marked variation of temperature. The scholars near the stove swelter with heat, while those in the remote parts of the room shiver with cold. The great deficiency of most teachers is want of skill in teaching. I could not, I would not make this remark too sweeping. Some teachers, I am happy to say, are thoroughly furnished for their duty. But still, the deficiency to which I have alluded, is lamentably common. Teachers who upon examination exhibit a commendable acquaintance with the studies required, when they become engaged in the actual duties of teaching show that they lack that happy faculty of imparting instruction to the scholars so necessary to successful teaching. They do not know how to meet and explain the real difficulties that hinder the scholar's progress. Their attempted explanation only serves to confuse the mind still more. And then there are many things that at first perplex the learner, which a little study on his part, might enaable him to understand, and there are other cases where the assistance of a teacher is a benefit. I need not enlarge upon this point. I am perfectly satisfied from personal observation that some teachers will learn their scholars in a term more than others in a year, and yet there may be no observable difference in regard to literary qualifications of these teachers. One knows how to teach, the other does not. Our greatest need is a State Normal School, in which those who propose to teach may be prepared for their vocation. Let me call your attention to one thing more. There is an entire want of uniformity of text books used in the schools. There are at least a half dozen different readers, spelling books, grammars, arithmetics, brought into school, volumes which happened to be in the house, a dilapidated inheritance from the older children. The teacher is obliged to arrange the scholars in many different classes, to render heterogeneous text books serviceable, when if the scholars were provided with uniform text books, they might be more advantageously to themselves and schools, grouped in fewer classes. In one school which I visited there were three little boys in primary arithmetic divided into three classes to meet the demands of three different primary arithmetics.

I am satisfied that, though our schools are not what they should be, they are improving from year to year. There is a set of old fogies, such as Douglas Jerrold describes, by saying they will not admire the new moon out of respect to that venerable institution the old moon, who declare that our schools instead of improving have been constantly growing worse and worse since they were boys. The same class of men declares that Pike's Arithmetic, Morse's Geography and Smith's Grammar, are superior to any text books now in use. To think that the ancient days are better than the present is a pardonable infirmity of age, but still the world, schools, everything are progressing, and will continue to progress till the millenium.

HENRY M. SWIFT, Bennington.

---

While visiting the schools during the past year, I have taken especial pains to examine the Registers in order to see if any real improvement has been made in our common schools since the introduction of the new school system so ably advocated by the Secretary of the Board of Education. And it gives me exceeding pleasure to make the contrast and report the relative degree of prosperity throughout the entire town. While the records indicate a slow but gradual increase of attendance, a less number of tardinesses and dismissals, they are at the same time also indicative of a deeper interest and earnest effort in the cause of practical common school education. Parents are more easily inclined to visit the schools, and are manifesting a more hopeful condition. The children generally, are more studious and more willing to pursue those branches calculated to give immediate practical benefit. For

several years past I have noticed, almost with vexation, the schools of this town blindly pursuing a course which, in my opinion, tended to alienate the teacher as well as scholar from the basis of a true education. Indeed our schools have been conducted on a plan quite inconsistent with the practical concerns of life—a plan not productive of the greatest good to the tender and impressible minds of the young. The general tendency of both teachers and pupils in our schools has been to confine them to certain branches of study exclusive of all others, and more particularly exclusive of those deemed of far more importance in the acquisition of a good substantial education. They seem to have placed, as of secondary importance, the exercise of reading and spelling, and so have indulged too freely in the pursuit of mathematics, which I think has proved detrimental to the real welfare of our schools. They have, in a word, gone to extremes: a regular mathematical epidemic appears to have overtaken them, one and all, and the natural result in consequence of this folly, has been the woful neglect of those other studies, which, it is now pretty generally conceded, lie at the very foundation of all usefulness.

What, it may be asked, is the value of the higher branches of education to any individual unless he has the free and grammatical use of language? All practical worth must depend entirely on this source of communication, and if it is not based on a good understanding of the elementaries, of what immediate use is a knowledge of the advanced studies? These questions, I am well aware, are beginning to be duly appreciated by the children, but more especially by the parents to whom we look for all beneficial changes in the work of educating the rising generation; and scholars everywhere are taking hold of these primary exercises with a will. And where once it was with pain I listened to the bad spelling and bad reading in consequence of this reckless omission, it now gives me delight to see the gradual elevation of these heretofore disreputable studies, to the highest elevation in our schools, and the other studies in turn receding to their relative position in the scale of valuable knowledge.

Again, the art of teaching is beginning to be more highly esteemed by the community in general. It is slowly, but surely assuming a position worthy of its dignity and honor; and its great importance in influencing the young mind in channels of right thought and action, gradually raises the teacher to that degree of sympathy and respect which he has so long eminently deserved, but never, until lately realized. Henceforth teachers, the greatest benefactors of the human race, will ever be reckoned as holding intimately vital relations to the permanent welfare of society, of the state and of the country.

Indeed this national crisis will convince us that the future character of Vermont depends entirely and absolutely on good teachers, and kind and patronizing parents. Here we must look for the twofold influence that is to draw out and develop the young men and women placed under our care. And I now presume to say, had we, years ago, worked on this plan; had we kindly fostered and unfolded the great resources of our free institutions of learning, and so tried to inculcate those everlasting principles of republicanism which our fathers established as the foundation of true government, our present critical circumstances, as a nation, might, possibly, have been avoided. But our neglect in this respect, has brought us to the verge of ruin. Our prosperity, therefore, has not been real, but morbid, built on wrong principles; and the minds of the young have not imbibed right ideas; but their education has been of such a nature as to strengthen their prejudices against the vital truths which underlie all human progress. Now to rectify this instruction so prevalent and so pernicious, should in the future and immediate present, be our disinterested and sole purpose. I would suggest what has been before suggested--the policy of introducing generally into the common schools of Vermont for her especial benefit, some valuable works on the exposition of the constitution of our State, as well as that of the United States, and on such other subjects as may have a tendency to draw out and unfold the patriotic feelings and sympathies of our fellow-citizens. If the object of a true education is to prepare people to live uprightly and to clearly discern their best interests *in common*, and so to eagerly follow those interests because they are the best, can any qualification better prepare them, than this, to live such a life. If not, our business in the future must be to give that peculiar instruction

in our common schools, which will make our children and their posterity free citizens, true patriots and statesmen, acting on Christian principles.

JOHN B. HOLLEY, Dorset.

---

I find from year to year a very decided improvement in the condition of our common schools, and in the interest awakened in the minds of parents in the community. Our teachers as a general thing are better qualified than formerly; they are more systematic and thorough in the discharge of their duties. Still they are not what they ought to be. I believe that the present standard of qualification is much too low, and ought to be elevated; that superintendents too often err on the side of lenity in the rather delicate and responsible duty of examining and licensing teachers. If they were more rigid in their examinations it would tend to exalt the standard of excellence among our teachers. No teacher should be employed or licensed who is not competent for the work, who does not realize the responsibilities that rest upon him, and that every impression which he makes upon the youthful mind is moulding a character whose influence is to exist throughout the boundless, ceaseless, cycles of eternity. We need not drones, but thinking, acting, living teachers, who will inspire their pupils with the fire of their own enthusiasm. Such teachers and such only, should be employed and those should be well remunerated.

One thing that operates injuriously upon the schools of our town and State, is our constant succession of teachers. For instance, a teacher engages to teach a school in a certain district, comes into the same and begins the school a stranger both to parents and pupils. But by the time the teacher has become firmly established in the school and has learned the character and disposition of his pupils, and they, the ways of the teacher, the term of school is half out. They are now prepared to advance most rapidly; but the remainder of the term glides swiftly away, vacation comes and as soon passes. Then the question comes up,—who is to teach our school? It must be a stranger of course, for the new committee man has a special friend that must be accommodated, whose interest is paramount to that of twenty or thirty children who are anxious to climb the hill of science!! Certainly, if a district is so unfortunate as to employ a poor teacher, for the good of their children they should give such a man their cordial and undivided support, and secure his or her services as long as they can.

I believe that the wood for schools should be raised by a tax on the Grand List. In a pecuniary point of view there is hardly a man who would realize the difference. The result would be that each school district would have on hand at all times a good supply of dry wood, adding much to the convenience, comfort and consequent progress in the school room.

Well do you say, Mr. Secretary, that "we must look to the Vermont of the future for that appreciation of our work, and gratitude therefor, which alone can adequately remunerate us." Let then parents, friends and teachers labor on in the great cause of education, incited by the prospect of a better day to come. Let us all be faithful in the discharge of our duties to the young and rising generation of to-day—that we may give to our country and humanity's service a wiser and better generation.

J. N. WISEMAN, Rupert.

---

In regard to the school registers I think it is but just to remark that the teachers are improving in the mode of keeping them every year, and for the most part our teachers have shown a laudable ambition in the neatness and accuracy with which they have registered the condition of their several schools; and the District Clerks are more and more intelligent in answering the interrogatives proposed to them. The feeling that all this particularity called for was necessary, and which very generally pervaded the minds of teachers and others at the time our present system was first introduced, is. I am happy to say, fast giving away to the true view

that this part of our work absolutely underlies all the advantage hoped for from the system and labors of our present Board of Education.

The presenting of statistical information before the minds of parents showing the actual loss in each district by non-attendance, tardiness and dismissal, cannot be too highly valued For when facts prove to them that they have lost one-fourth of the attendance upon their schools, which they would have had if their children had attended regularly, they begin to think that a remedy must be sought.

In regard to the present system of raising the wood by a tax upon the scholar; he who will take the trouble to examine this matter will find generally that the wood is green and of an inferior quality—such as can be got the most cheaply, and that now and then there is not enough of any kind, so the school must stop until somebody brings another load of wood. Tax the wood upon the Grand List, and then each district will have a good supply of wood on hand.

WM. J. HAMILTON, Sandgate.

---

The schools in our town have been in a prosperous condition the past year, having made good improvement, all things considered. There needs, however, "line upon line, and precept upon precept," not only to sustain. but also to increase the present interest manifested in behalf of our schools. The present school law meets general approbation among our people, and a very great majority of them are decidedly in favor of defraying the whole expense on the Grand List.

O. G. GREEN, Groton.

---

Once more it becomes my duty (and a duty which I deem a privilege) to return to you the official report of the town of Hardwick. And while our country has been shaken to its centre by the thrusts of traitorous hands, while the minds of our citizens have been led to wander somewhat from home, and have been deeply engaged in scrutinizing the actions and motives of congress, of the cabinet and generals, and busied with the fluctuations of commerce and finance, I am happy in being able to say that the interests of education have not been forgotten at home, but they have turned instinctively to our common schools as the nurseries of freedom, as the only sure foundation of republican Government; for where the common people are educated, neither tyranny nor slavery have, or can ever prevail.

The schools of our town the past year have been better as a whole than they were during the two previous years. We have had two weeks school less than last year. The expense of schools in town the past year has been $140—$54 less than last year.

The attendance of the scholars during the summer term was better than last year, but on account of the sickness during the winter term it has not been so good as last year. Many scholars in town have been kept out of school when they were slightly ill with colds, because their parents were fearful of something worse.

The past year there have been 2742 instances of tardiness in town, 1547 less than last year. We have had more visits by committees and parents than last year. The order of our schools has been good. and there has been a decided change for the better in giving short lessons suited to the capacity of the scholars.

Our school houses are good and convenient except in four districts. In one of these there is to be a new house built the coming summer, and we think the other three will soon be supplied with good houses, globes and maps.

The greatest evil of our schools, is the neglect of the primary branches of an education. There is too much National Arithmetic, too much Algebra, Rhetoric and Latin in our schools; all of the above mentioned studies have been pursued in our schools the past three months. The primary branches must be studied in common schools or nowhere. For when scholars are grown up and go to the acade-

ny they are not willing to expose their ignorance by pursuing them there, and they go out into life stumbling like blind men over the simple truths which should have been taught them in childhood.

I think the Teachers' Institutes are the most powerful agents we have to reform our common schools in these respects. Every one who has had a chance to judge from personal knowledge, will, I think, admit that the Teachers' Institutes have made a material change for the better in our common schools.

The registers in this town the past year have been kept with great care, and the presentation of the facts which they furnish, before the public mind, showing the exact condition of the schools of the State, will ultimately arouse the minds of our citizens to remove every impediment in the way of the education of children of the State.

There are many teachers in this part of the State who still cling closely to the text books of our schools, making these the main instruments in the cause of education. Hence many hear lesson after lesson and give no instruction whatever. Yet there has been much improvement in this respect the past three years. The act of the Legislature, authorizing the Board of Education to select a list of books to be used in our schools, and making these binding upon teachers and Superintendents to recommend as new books are needed, has saved the State several thousand dollars. For the expense of books in this State during the last ten years has been nearly equal to all the rest of the expense of our common schools. Now we are not infested as formerly by runners from publishing houses in the cities once or twice in a term, seeking to exchange books by our paying half the value of the new ones. Some, from time to time would exchange, while others did not, and thus the number of classes in our schools was multiplied to twice the number of scholars in attendance.

Now the schools of this town are generally well classed, and much labor is saved thereby.

A. J. SANBORN, Hardwick.

---

I think the schools in our town have improved within the last two years. This fact, though not very obvious to a casual observer, is nevertheless manifested by the higher standard of qualifications required of teachers, by the greater punctuality of attendance, by the more thorough manner the different studies are pursued, and the better general deportment of our scholars. Keeping a register of the attendance, tardiness and deportment of the scholars, has a very salutary influence. I am satisfied that there has been twenty-five per cent. less instances of tardiness and absences than there would have been had there been no registers kept. People have not that apathy, that indifference with regard to schools that their conduct indicates. There is quite an interest felt in the cause of education, but it wants something to put it in force and give it direction. If District Clerks would do their duty and fill out their part of the registers properly, that would be one step in the right direction. We need also better and more efficient Superintendents.

Many people think the present school law has a great deal of superfluous and complicated machinery about it, and we want superintendents capable and willing to explain and defend it. I find that the most intelligent portion of community, those most conversant with the present school law, think it is nearly perfect in principle and are anxious that it should not be repealed or materially altered. If you could be furnished with means for holding Institutes in all the principal towns in the State, it would be money and time well laid out. In localities where they have been held there is a marked improvement in the schools, but there are thousands of people in the State that never have had an opportunity of attending them, and consequently cannot appreciate their value.

Heretofore I have been somewhat skeptical with regard to the conditions of school houses having so much influence on the moral character of the scholars as some have contended. But recent developments have convinced me that it is so. Within two years, four out of the seven districts in town have built new houses,

and when I see the improvement in the deportment of the scholars in those districts where they have built new houses, and the deportment of the scholars in the districts where they have only old and dilapidated school houses, I was constrained to advise them to repair their houses forthwith.

Another circumstance connected with our schools I think worthy of remark.—In each of the seven districts in town, female teachers have been employed the past winter, and I think they have fairly demonstrated the fact that they are as capable of governing schools as male teachers.

NELSON MORRIS, Kirby.

---

The schools in this town will compare favorably with last year. In a majority of cases, experienced teachers have been employed—teachers who have devoted themselves to their work. The improper indulgence of many parents in allowing their children to be absent from school, is a serious embarrassment in some instances to success. It lessens the attendance, diverts the attention of such scholars from study, and the influence is unfavorable on the whole school. Some of our scholars with a good beginning, have declined in this manner. I have given special instruction to the teachers relating to school registers, embracing correctness in keeping the records and returning them in good condition. There has been an improvement with teachers in this respect during the past year.

My annual report to the town elicits some attention with the teachers. Knowing that a report will be made, proves a valuable incentive to faithfulness in order to establish a good reputation as teachers.

M. C. HENDERSON, Lyndon.

---

Penmanship is grossly neglected in our schools. All effort will be made the coming season to secure a change in this respect.

Many persons still fail to recognize any difference in the natnre of the case between a *teacher* and a man employed to do any ordinary work. Happily there are very few of this class. The surest way to convert such people is to give them teachers of a higher order of talent. The notion of hiring the "cheapest teachers" is rapidly becoming obsolete. The more rigid the examination of candidates the better "*in the long run.*"

The Registers in general are faithfully kept, and the plan of dividing the public money according to the attendance of pupils works well.

The more copies of the annual report sent to town the better. People read them carefully, and gain a good deal of valuable information from them.

C. O. THOMPSON, Peacham.

---

In this town during the past year the schools have been to a good degree successful and prosperous. The services of experienced and successful teachers have been secured in many of the districts, and to this circumstance we are indebted in a great measure for the prosperity of our schools.

Tardiness is one great evil, against which teachers have to contend, and it prevails to an undue extent in the majority of our schools. In order to remedy the injurious effects of this habit, and to eradicate it entirely, the hearty co-operation of the parents with the teachers is in the highest degree necessary. Until such co-operation is cordially and faithfully extended, a thorough reform in this matter cannot be expected.

T. J. McCLURE, Ryegate.

---

In my opinion there is nothing in connection with our common school system that serves to exert a more salutary and healthful influence upon the minds of the people, or that tends more directly to promote the best interests of our public schools than the yearly Institutes that are held throughout the State.

Another method of scattering much useful information, as well as bringing many interesting statistical facts before the people, is the annual Report of the Secretary. Such startling facts as are here presented to the public must tend greatly to arouse the attention of the public mind, and awaken an interest in the noble efforts which are at present being made to improve the school system of our State. In order to make these reports at all accurate, and convey to the public mind the actual condition of the schools of the State as they really exist, the Registers are of course indispensable.

ALFRED S. LAMB, Sheffield.

---

The educational interests of this town are gradually increasing. We have had the past season a company of *practical* teachers, aiming at the complete mastery of the lessons. The deportment of the schools, in most cases, has been worthy of note. Of twenty-three schools, all but two have been taught by young ladies.

The people are assuming a right position in regard to common schools—are ready to make sacrifices to sustain them. The school law is appreciated and respected. A good omen is the fact that more than a thousand visits have been made by our citizens to the various schools the past year, averaging more than two visits to each family in town sending scholars.

H. P. CUSHING, St. Johnsbury.

---

We have had no schools taught by males in this town for the past year, yet, so far as my observation extends, our schools have been quite as satisfactory as in former seasons when many of our winter terms were taught by males. Though our schools in this town are mostly small, a very rapid improvement has been made in most of them since the introduction of the new school books, and under the working of our new school law. Twenty-five years ago a teacher was thought to be quite smart in *this* town if he could "work out" all the examples in Adam's New Arithmetic; but to-day we have in many of our school young ladies between the ages of 15 and 20 that will place upon the board the most difficult examples in Greenleaf's National, with accuracy, and with such quickness that the eye can hardly trace the movement of the hand. They will also take the most complicated sentences, analyze, transpose and apply to them the rules of grammar with a rapidity, correctness and ease that is almost astonishing, and wherefore this improvement? From the introduction of a better classification of school books and better school laws.

Many of our school houses are quite too old and cold for the comfort of their occupants. Could we have a new recruit of school houses *in full*, properly constructed and handsomely situated, we think our scholars would have much to induce and but little to impede in climbing the hill of science.

J. M. PILLSBURY, Sutton.

---

Our present school law is thought to be a decided improvement, especially that part of it relating to the division of the public money. It would be impossible to make a school law that would suit all minds. It seems very necessary that something be done to arouse public attention regarding district schools, and if the law could be fully carried out and Teachers' Institutes attended as they should be, it would add great interest to the public schools.

R. J. MORSE, Bolton.

---

I am happy to say that there has been a manifest improvement in our schools of the past year. I think that our teachers as a class have been more successful than in any former year since my superintendence of schools. Indeed they have, generally been persons of more experience, but two persons having been employed who had not previously taught. School committees have taken more pains to se-

cure well qualified teachers, and such teachers are becoming better known and appreciated; and parents are, I think, manifesting more interest in this matter, than formerly. Still our schools are far from being as efficient as they should be. Parents must feel and manifest more interest in them if they ever come up to that measure of usefulness which may justly be expected of them.

One of the greatest evils I find in our schools is the disposition on the part of teachers to try to take their scholars over too much ground and of proceeding to the more difficult branches, before the elementary branches have been mastered. Another is the attempt to teach too many things. There is a tendency at present to introduce too many studies in all our schools. We often hear the remark that this and that thing "should at once be made a branch of study in all our common schools." This is said of almost the whole round of natural sciences, and of a great many things besides. Now it seems to me, that this cannot be the dictate of sound sense. *Everything cannot be well taught in our common schools.* And the multiplicity of studies introduced is, in my estimation, a very great detriment to them. The peculiar province of the common school is to afford *thorough instruction in a few things*. True, the desire should be awakened for more extended attainments. But the instruction given, as far as possible, should be complete in itself. A few branches thoroughly possessed, are worth more than a multitude merely glanced at. The idea of changing our common schools to Universities where children are made to pass over the whole range of the sciences is one of the most preposterous imaginable. The only remedy I see for this, is the general introduction of graded schools.

C. M. SEATON, Charlotte.

---

The schools in our town have been quite as prosperous during the past year as during the year preceding. It is an encouraging fact that although we are passing through the new and strange experience of war, the common schools of our town have not received less attention from the people than before. The expense incurred has been greater. The teachers have been faithful. The schools with three exceptions have been prosperous.

Our school houses are not what they ought to be. Something *has* been done to improve them, but more needs to be done.

The views presented in the last Secretary's report and the information given must prove to be a most valuable contribution to the available literature on this subject.

J. D. KINGSBURY, Colchester.

---

The school law in the main works well, and, so far as I know, is gaining in the estimation of the real friends of education. I think that the school registers if persevered in will be instrumental in working out for the State a great reformation in educational matters. Properly kept, and they show real evils as they actually exist, and that certainly is what we want, for how can we legislate against errors unless we know what they are? Some complain of difficulty in keeping them; but a few words from the Superintendent to the teacher showing their importance will insure in nearly every case a correct report.

Indeed my best teachers prefer them to any other system of keeping "school account," and say they should hardly know how to do without them.

I have heard but one sentiment expressed with regard to Teachers' Institutes, and that is decidedly in their favor. Even that class which is sometimes denominated "fogies" have partly opened their eyes and say they "guess they are a good thing," and do not think it best to have them discontinued. Our best men regret the witholding of the already too small appropriation for their support, and earnestly hope that the next legislature will restore it and even more if necessary.

If a niggardly spirit is to characterize the legislation of our State, and no appropriation, or at least only a stinted one, can be allowed, for improving our social condition and bringing us somewhere near to a level with our sister states,

Another method of scattering much useful information, as well as bringing many interesting statistical facts before the people, is the annual Report of the Secretary. Such startling facts as are here presented to the public must tend greatly to arouse the attention of the public mind, and awaken an interest in the noble efforts which are at present being made to improve the school system of our State. In order to make these reports at all accurate, and convey to the public mind the actual condition of the schools of the State as they really exist, the Registers are of course indispensable.

ALFRED S. LAMB, Sheffield.

---

The educational interests of this town are gradually increasing. We have had the past season a company of *practical* teachers, aiming at the complete mastery of the lessons. The deportment of the schools, in most cases, has been worthy of note. Of twenty-three schools, all but two have been taught by young ladies.

The people are assuming a right position in regard to common schools—are ready to make sacrifices to sustain them. The school law is appreciated and respected. A good omen is the fact that more than a thousand visits have been made by our citizens to the various schools the past year, averaging more than two visits to each family in town sending scholars.

H. P. CUSHING, St. Johnsbury.

---

We have had no schools taught by males in this town for the past year, yet, so far as my observation extends, our schools have been quite as satisfactory as in former seasons when many of our winter terms were taught by males. Though our schools in this town are mostly small, a very rapid improvement has been made in most of them since the introduction of the new school books, and under the working of our new school law. Twenty-five years ago a teacher was thought to be quite smart in *this* town if he could "work out" all the examples in Adam's New Arithmetic; but to-day we have in many of our school young ladies between the ages of 15 and 20 that will place upon the board the most difficult examples in Greenleaf's National, with accuracy, and with such quickness that the eye can hardly trace the movement of the hand. They will also take the most complicated sentences, analyze, transpose and apply to them the rules of grammar with a rapidity, correctness and ease that is almost astonishing, and wherefore this improvement? From the introduction of a better classification of school books and better school laws.

Many of our school houses are quite too old and cold for the comfort of their occupants. Could we have a new recruit of school houses *in full*, properly constructed and handsomely situated, we think our scholars would have much to induce and but little to impede in climbing the hill of science.

J. M. PILLSBURY, Sutton.

---

Our present school law is thought to be a decided improvement, especially that part of it relating to the division of the public money. It would be impossible to make a school law that would suit all minds. It seems very necessary that something be done to arouse public attention regarding district schools, and if the law could be fully carried out and Teachers' Institutes attended as they should be, it would add great interest to the public schools.

R. J. MORSE, Bolton.

---

I am happy to say that there has been a manifest improvement in our schools of the past year. I think that our teachers as a class have been more successful than in any former year since my superintendence of schools. Indeed they have, generally been persons of more experience, but two persons having been employed who had not previously taught. School committees have taken more pains to se-

cure well qualified teachers, and such teachers are becoming better known and appreciated; and parents are, I think, manifesting more interest in this matter, than formerly. Still our schools are far from being as efficient as they should be. Parents must feel and manifest more interest in them if they ever come up to that measure of usefulness which may justly be expected of them.

One of the greatest evils I find in our schools is the disposition on the part of teachers to try to take their scholars over too much ground and of proceeding to the more difficult branches, before the elementary branches have been mastered. Another is the attempt to teach too many things. There is a tendency at present to introduce too many studies in all our schools. We often hear the remark that this and that thing "should at once be made a branch of study in all our common schools." This is said of almost the whole round of natural sciences, and of a great many things besides. Now it seems to me, that this cannot be the dictate of sound sense. *Everything cannot be well taught in our common schools.* And the multiplicity of studies introduced is, in my estimation, a very great detriment to them. The peculiar province of the common school is to afford *thorough instruction in a few things*. True, the desire should be awakened for more extended attainments. But the instruction given, as far as possible, should be complete in itself. A few branches thoroughly possessed, are worth more than a multitude merely glanced at. The idea of changing our common schools to Universities where children are made to pass over the whole range of the sciences is one of the most preposterous imaginable. The only remedy I see for this, is the general introduction of graded schools.

C. M. SEATON, Charlotte.

---

The schools in our town have been quite as prosperous during the past year as during the year preceding. It is an encouraging fact that although we are passing through the new and strange experience of war, the common schools of our town have not received less attention from the people than before. The expense incurred has been greater. The teachers have been faithful. The schools with three exceptions have been prosperous.

Our school houses are not what they ought to be. Something *has* been done to improve them, but more needs to be done.

The views presented in the last Secretary's report and the information given must prove to be a most valuable contribution to the available literature on this subject.

J. D. KINGSBURY, Colchester.

---

The school law in the main works well, and, so far as I know, is gaining in the estimation of the real friends of education. I think that the school registers if persevered in will be instrumental in working out for the State a great reformation in educational matters. Properly kept, and they show real evils as they actually exist, and that certainly is what we want, for how can we legislate against errors unless we know what they are? Some complain of difficulty in keeping them; but a few words from the Superintendent to the teacher showing their importance will insure in nearly every case a correct report.

Indeed my best teachers prefer them to any other system of keeping "school account," and say they should hardly know how to do without them.

I have heard but one sentiment expressed with regard to Teachers' Institutes, and that is decidedly in their favor. Even that class which is sometimes denominated "fogies" have partly opened their eyes and say they "guess they are a good thing," and do not think it best to have them discontinued. Our best men regret the withholding of the already too small appropriation for their support, and earnestly hope that the next legislature will restore it and even more if necessary.

If a niggardly spirit is to characterize the legislation of our State, and no appropriation, or at least only a stinted one, can be allowed, for improving our social condition and bringing us somewhere near to a level with our sister states,

then certainly it will not be strange if our best men go from us,—it will be no wonder if our Peases and our Clarks leave us, and we may expect nothing but that it will continue to be said of Vermont that "it is a good place to move from."

D. H. MACOMBER, Essex.

---

The common schools in town during the past year have been interesting and prosperous. Teachers have exhibited a commendable zeal in their work, and their effort to do good has been crowned with success. Scholars have been interested in their studies and have made good progress.

It is indeed gratifying to find our schools in a condition peaceful and encouraging, in this day, when most all the great interests of the land are disturbed and severely injured by the deep struggle which is going on. It is gratifying because it shows the strong hold which schools have upon the public mind, the firm conviction respecting their importance. But this conviction needs to be strengthened more and more. It cannot be too strong and firm. The line of duty is plain. We must labor with hopefulness and zeal, and do all we can to give to our schools the greatest efficiency and sweep possible.

CALEB B. TRACY, Jericho.

---

I believe that it is now very generally conceded that the present school law of this State is well adapted to the accomplishment of the ends contemplated. As a system of supervision being simple in its construction and uniform in its operation, with some slight modifications, perhaps, it is all that we need. Our school districts have ever been the germs of democracy. The Board of Education, the Secretary, the town Superintendents as well as the Prudential Committees are their *servants*, to carry out their expressed or known will. The duties of each being defined by law, there need be no clashing or interfering with each other's prerogatives. The school register is of immense value in regulating our schools, and a very fair index of the moral temperature that pervades the school room. By an examination of this the superintendent can gain more correct knowledge of the actual state of the school than from all other sources. It is well fitted to impress upon the mind of the teacher his responsibility, to make him prompt and faithful and to give order and uniformity to the school. Most of the teachers in this town the past year have aimed at correctness in their reports, which I think cannot be said to the same extent of the district clerks. Their vague and indefinite answers and many blanks have occasioned me immense perplexity and trouble. The registers of all the districts in town were returned to the town clerk's office at the appointed time, but a part of the fractional districts were not received in season for this report. Connected with the registers are the annual reports. These are becoming quite an institution. From no other source can we derive a correct knowledge of the present state, the wants and prospects of the common schools of Vermont. These reports which are got up with much labor and care, give us a vast amount of statistical information relating to our schools which superintendents may weave into their reports at town meetings, and thus be made to tell upon every family in the State. We have also the experience and observation of town superintendents from which much information as to the actual condition of our schools may be gathered. No one can contemplate the outlays and expenditures for common schools in the State without the conviction that they are worth looking after. But we should not fail to look at them from a higher stand point which no mere scale of dollars and cents can measure. The information embodied in the annual reports as to general principles of teaching, of discipline, of physicial education, and the construction of school houses, I regard as invaluable, and verily regret that it cannot meet the eye of every parent in the state. Of the Teachers' Institutes which have been held and conducted by the Secretary, I have had the privilege of attending but few; those which I have attended I think have been judiciously conducted and useful to all present. They appear to be just what is necessary in every community to fix the mind upon the interests of common schools and to break in upon that

beaten track of thinking and teaching into which every teacher is prone to slide. They answer the purpose of "kindling wood" both to teachers and parents to set fire to those slumbering elements which are within. Besides they have the incidental influence of forming a brotherhood and sisterhood of teachers. From the best information which I have been able to obtain, no *one* agency is exciting more interest or doing more for the good of common schools than the Teachers' Institutes as conducted by the Secretary.

So far as I have had an opportunity to notice, our teachers do not return from these meetings with some new stereotyped system of instruction, to which everything must give way, but with increased desire to impart knowledge in such ways and by such means as commend themselves to the plain common sense of both teacher and scholar. What has most excited my surprise in these Institutes is the immense labor of "talking" which the Secretary performs without missing a word!!

I wish to say, as to the schools in this town, I think there is a tendency to neglect the elementary studies, such as reading, spelling, writing, grammar, geography, and give undue prominence to algebra, Greenleaf's national arithmetic, philosophy, physiology, and such like studies. Now the common school in rural districts should always be a common school, a school for the masses and not for the select few. Another thing that operates unfavorably is, that a certain class, and perhaps the best class, do not patronize the common school. They are afraid that their children will learn bad habits, and thus they surrender the common school to the dominion of the low and vicious, and, if I mistake not, some town Superintendents have defended and acted upon this principle. Is there not in such a practice a manifest lack of both religion and patriotism? Ought not every man to labor to make common schools respectable and virtuous, and how can this be done unless the respectable and virtuous patronize them by placing their children there and insisting that the evil practices shall be expelled from the schools? One word more. In my humble opinion our teachers spend too much time in schools in cyphering. I doubt not we have teachers in this town, who, the past winter, have spent weeks of school hours in solving mathematical problems with little benefit to any one but themselves. These things ought not so to be.

GEO. W. RANSLOW, Milton.

---

Most of the teachers have attended at least one of the Teachers' Institutes during the year. The majority of them were experienced, and some of them very efficient teachers. My experience during the year has impressed me vividly with the importance of school discipline in order to success. One would scarcely believe that so much difference could exist in the same schools under different management. The difference between a good and a poor teacher is as wide as that between the respective vocations of the head of a large and successful business establishment and the idler, and considering the results dependent upon such responsible trusts, vastly wider.

There is to some extent still pervading the town, the old idea of a mistaken economy in the choice of teachers; but as a whole, the town is perhaps in advance of many others in this respect.

With some exceptions the school houses are quite well furnished with the means of physical comfort, but of those modern means of improvement and the facilities for increasing an interest in the studies of the school room there is a deplorable lack.

The advance which our State has made in the attention given to the subject of common schools, has, in my opinion, already had effect enough for good to convey a rebuke to the apathy and want of appreciation cherished to such an inexcusable extent still.

C. W. CLARK, Brighton.

---

It will be seen by the statistical part of my report that the number of instances

of "tardiness" during the school year, is lamentably large, to wit: 1,390! For this there is no valid excuse; and I took the occasion, in my report to the town, to dwell at length upon the injurious consequences thence arising to the schools; and from the feeling manifested on hearing the report, I am encouraged to hope for a better state of things in the future. There is getting to be an increased anxiety to hear the annual School Report; whereas, when the custom of making such a report first began, scarce any interest was manifested in, or attention paid to the matter. Now, the report is not only called for, and well listened to, but its suggestions are commented upon, and so far as deemed reasonable, and within the means of the district to carry out, are well heeded.

From this I draw a favorable inference for the future of our schools, for I repeat (what I have stated in all my reports,) that when parents come to manifest a vigilant interest in the progress of the schools—as much interest as they do in the prosperity of their ordinary business affairs, then they will have good schools. The conditions requisite for the making of the school what it ought to be, are, a good school house, well furnished, a thoroughly competent and conscientious teacher, scholars punctual and steady in their attendance upon school, well supplied with the needed books, and so governed at home that it may be possible for the teacher to govern them at school during its progress; and all these conditions *begin* with parents. Wherefore, schools that are worthless, or next to worthless, are primarily and principally chargeable to them. Now, when they come to realize this fully—and it is believed they are making progress in this direction—the cause of common school education will begin a new and vigorous growth.

I think I can say with safety that the schools in this town the current year have improved on those of the previous year. The attendance, on the whole, has been better; there has been a better supply of the right kind of books; and the teachers, as a whole, have been better qualified for their interesting and responsible labors.

In only two districts has there been a case of corporal punishment; and in those two the school government has not been so good as in the other districts. My observation satisfies me that very *harsh* or very *fretful* teachers, are not apt to have, and, indeed, cannot well have good order in their schools; and that the greater the talents and accomplishments of the teacher, the less occasion will there be to use the rod. A *kind manner* and *firm purpose* will generally dispense with the necessity of flogging, in my opinion.

We have had but one male teacher during the year, and then but for a single term. The impression seems to prevail that *woman* is better adapted than *man*, to teach the young. Whether this be so or not, one thing is certain, and that is that competent female teachers can be had much cheaper than male teachers of a similar grade; and this, in most instances, would be sufficient to control the choice.

We have had two *model* teachers; and in their schools the progress was far better than in the others, the teaching being much more thorough, and the method better adapted to the imparting of instruction.

It is intended to make the examination of teachers more stringent hereafter, in order to shut out that large class who get into the schools merely because their services can be had for a low figure, when even the smallest figure is more than their services are worth.

GEO. W. HARTSHORN, Canaan.

---

From our annual report we make the following extract:

While business of all kinds has suffered disarrangement, and felt the harsh and unnatural jar of war,—being either inflated to unusual and dangerous heights, or depressed far below its accustomed level—our schools have pursued the even tenor of their way, and in success will compare very favorably with those of any former year. During the past year twenty-four different teachers have been employed in teaching in town. Five males, and nineteen female teachers, being a far greater proportion than usual of the latter class. Of the twenty-four teachers employed, only ten were residents of the town; and we would particularly call your attention to this fact which is in itself not over creditable to us as a town, and is yearly the cause

of more failures of success in schools than any other evil, the remedy for which lies wholly in our power to apply.

When we speak of teachers from out of town, we do not refer to those who, though living beyond the geographical limits of the town, have taught here for several terms; and whose schools have been among the best we had. But we do deprecate that too common and mistaken policy which leads us to employ so many teachers concerning whom we know little or nothing. There are often those who have had little or no experience; or if they have taught before may not have been very successful elsewhere, and coming into our schools without being acquainted with them or our methods of teaching; the result has been that they have not been successful. Such teachers we have almost uniformly found to fail in teaching the primary branches, and also in the judicious management of their schools. Were we necessitated to procure strangers for our teachers it would be enough to be deplored; but when we have a supply of teachers in our own town (or immediate vicinity) it does, to say the least, seem very foolish to pass them by and hire the first entire stranger who makes application. It is not enough to know that a teacher has obtained a sufficient amount of book learning, to be a student of some college; or has ever *professed* to have successfully taught several terms of school elsewhere; unless such an one have the unmistaken characteristics of an energetic, thorough, prudent, judicious and *correctly moral* teacher about him, we had better let him stay in his own country and among his own kin, where he may be appreciated, rather than run the great risk of having a poor school by employing him. Many students of colleges and the higher institutions of learning, are poor teachers from the fact that in their haste to study the higher branches, they have neglected the *common ones*, and now think them beneath their notice, and of course do not and often cannot teach them correctly or acceptably.

Many a graduate of our common district schools whose heart is in his work, and who feels that the very common though old fashioned studies of reading, spelling, writing, geography, arithmetic, &c., are of more practical importance to the great mass of pupils than algebra, geometry, Greek or Latin, (and so is not above trying to teach them thoroughly and practically,) is a hundred fold better instructor than the class aforementioned.

A noticeable and gratifying improvement in the keeping of the school registers is seen, many of the teachers and districts vying with each other in the neatness with which their registers shall be returned to the town clerk's office at the close of the school year. Still the slovenly and untidy appearance of some is, even now, shocking to behold. The division of the public money according to the average attendance of scholars—the recording of the moral as well as intellectual standing of the pupil in the registers, are each based upon right principles, and are beneficial to the schools.

One district in town which has supported eighteen weeks of school, has no marks of tardiness or absences upon the register for the year.

One of the greatest, if not the very greatest instrumentalities for the improvement and elevation of our schools, is found in the Teachers' Institutes,—for by these not only do teachers gain much important knowledge of the theory and practice of successful teaching, and are held to a more full realization of the importance and responsibleness of their vocation, but the great mass of the people are also aroused to a far greater degree of interest in the cause of education, and to a more generous and hearty co-operation with teachers and others engaged in the same important work. And may the day be far distant when Vermont shall so far forget her true interest as to virtually cripple or lessen their usefulness by withholding from them her confidence or generous support. When we shall have become fully awakened to the importance of a correct thorough mental and moral education for our children and ourselves; and shall fully realize that the prosperity and happiness of the state lies in the virtue and intelligence of her people, and shall each become co-laborers and teachers in the important work, may we reasonably hope to see our common schools assume their proper position in our estimation, and becoming prosperous and useful in the highest degree.

J. E. WOODBURY, Concord.

One of the good things resulting from the operations of the school law, obliging the use of the school registers, is, that our community think that I could not make a "decent report" to the town unless I had obtained the statistical information contained in them. The first two years I had to collect the registers myself before March meeting. This year, every one was in the Clerk's office as soon as their respective schools were through, and my report was made from them. And there is quite a strife among the districts to see which will secure the greatest attendance. In one district the Committee offered a prize to every scholar that would attend every day through the term. The Registers tell the truth, and the whole truth concerning our schools. By them alone we only know whether we are advancing or whether on the retrograde. And they give Superintendents the privilege of reporting the facts to the community. As my report is not printed, I posted upon the wall of the Town Hall the most important part of the information gleaned from the Registers, for the benefit of my townsmen.

I speak with pleasure of the gratifying results that have accrued from the Institutes. There has been a resurrection in the mind of the community upon the subject of public schools, that is gratifying to behold. Teachers have been aroused, and begin to reflect upon their duties and the way they should perform them. The schools are becoming more practical and efficient. There are not so many poor teachers, and consequently but few failures. The public examination of teachers is not now a mere farce. New school houses are uprooting the "relics." Town and County Teachers' Associations are organized for the purpose of public discussions, and the mass of community are beginning to awake and to view this subject as an American citizen should. These are but a few of the results flowing directly from the Institutes.

And what shall be said of the assembled wisdom which is sent up to Montpelier? Rather what can be said? Where is the man that will presume to offer an apology? This boasted Green Mountain State *too poor* to pay $420 per year for fourteen Institutes. And then they will "gas over kits, cats and mice" long enough to pay for one hundred Institutes each year at $30 each. I believe there is a just retribution that awaits them. Just remember, Mr. Adams, that we *must* have our Institutes, and if this great State of Vermont is too poor to pay for them, that there are poor teachers enough in little stigmatized Essex that will, and cheerfully too. Better give the capital to the "moles and bats" and turn Vermont into a pasture, rather than let her system of public schools be overthrown. For however poor her schools may be, all that she is to-day, she owes to them.

I think, as I reported to the town, that if we wish for a quiet, orderly, peace-loving community in coming years—if we hope that the years of our declining life may be passed in the prosperity of a peaceful and happy community, let us make a large provision for the instruction of the children, not only for those who gather around our own firesides, but for all the children of the town, and especially those, who, without much pains-taking, will be sure to remain in ignorance and vice. If there is any interest, which as good citizens we ought to foster with peculiar care, it is the interest of our public schools. If there is any object for which we ought to make liberal provisions—expending whatever money its most successful prosecution demands, that object is the education of the children of this town.

CHARLES W. KING, Lunenburg.

---

Parents are feeling a little more interest in the schools than heretofore. I see but one thing really in the way of success in our school matters, that is, as long as we have a living law,—we must have living men to work that law. Our school law as it now stands is a good machinery, constructed of good materials so far as it pertains to the State, and if the towns will funish as good material in the person of a superintendent, that is a man who has a heart full of the love of schools and is willing to sacrifice ease and time, and money if needed to help on the public school interest. One who instead of trying to make a school law will try to abide by and carry out the one we have, lending his whole influence to support the same. And then our districts have something to do and say in this matter by finding or furnishing a suitable place

for their schools. In our town we have but one good house, and that one is nearly on one side of the district, so that some go one and a half or two miles to school while the furtherest on the other side are within one hundred and fifty rods, leaving a bone of contention. Others are either in a dilapidated condition or on a bad site, or have none at all, and keep their school in shops or dwelling houses. I insist upon it, that until we can have comfortable school houses provided by our districts, they have no right to expect the present system to advance as it should. But there is more to be expected from the school district than to furnish a good school house. They should furnish good material in the form of furniture, fixtures and apparatus suitable to be used in the school room. And yet more, they should be careful in the choice of their officers to get men who have an interest in their schools, especially for their prudential committees. If we get a committee that is more interested in saving a tax on the district than in the intellectual and moral training of the children of his district, that is, if he hires and puts into school anything that offers to teach, because a teacher comes along that will teach for one dollar or one dollar and twenty-five cents per week, to save a tax; that district ought not to find fault with the law, but with themselves for they are in the fault.

When we pay $1,50 or $2,00 per week even for a summer school, and have a good school we are the gainers. One good school is worth more than three poor ones. Let our districts see to it that they secure living men to act in concert with the town, and town act in concert with the state, and we shall lose all of our complaining spirit for we shall see our schools where they should be and what they should be.

JACOB EVANS, Victory.

---

There is evidently a growing interest among the people in regard to the common schools in this town. Parents are realizing the importance of visiting the schools and showing to both teachers and pupils that some attention will be given to them—that the subject of education of children in the common school is *respectable* and should be elevated to its proper position.

I think the suggestions in the last report of the Secretary of the Board of Education will be eminently useful, in respect to the proper construction, location, &c., of school houses.

O. F. FASSETT, Berkshire.

---

At our annual town meetings the past two years I was called upon by prudential committee men to report the condition of our common schools. It has been the custom from "time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary" for towns merely to call upon the overseer of the poor for his report of the condition of the town paupers. But not until one year ago last March meeting has a superintendent's report been called for.

I regarded the call at that time as a sign of interest in the right direction. My report was very favorably received.

IRA W. CLARK, Fairfax.

---

Although some objected to the new school laws when they first appeared, yet I think they are working well with us and gaining favor each year.

The registers were most of them very poorly filled out last year, especially by district clerks. But with a little urging the most of them have done much better this year.

CHARLES W. JANES, Montgomery.

---

That the schools generally in this town are in a *good* condition, I think no one who knows about them would think of claiming. There have been some good schools—two or three excellent ones—during the year. There are some warm friends of education here—men of large liberal views, and we hope there is a

"good time coming" for the educational interests of the community. But the signs of its near approach are certainly not very great.

In two districts in town there has been no school at all during the year, while in four others there has been only one term. One reason for this is the miserable condition of the school houses in these districts, and yet there has not been a cent expended the past year in any of them to provide better. How long can districts and communities *afford* to live in this way? The school houses in town are generally poor—not more than three or four that can be called comfortable. I am more than ever convinced of the necessity of the school law with its or some equivalent machinery for getting at and stirring up *the people*. Is education the great secular interest of the state? Is it the real foundation of our temporal wealth and happiness, and prosperity as a people? Who *believes* it? And yet nothing is more certain. What is the argument then from the fact that so little comparatively of what needs to be done has been accomplished by the school law, and the efforts which its officers have been enabled to make? That we should give up trying—abandon the law and call the whole scheme for improving and awakening an interest in our schools a failure? Of course not, just the reverse. We must redouble our efforts and our outlay. When the Secretary of the Board has such liberal pay that he can afford to spend three or four times the amount of labor that he now does among the people—and when it is the same with town superintendents—and when something like a similar liberal policy is pursued in regard to Teachers' Institutes, and other means for improving the schools and awakening an interest in them—*then* will the money which is expended bring in something like a proportionate return. Not that I believe it does not now, great as the disadvantage under which it is used—actually accomplish more for the best good of the state than any other similar amount expended by the state for any purpose whatever. And yet a great deal of it is wasted, necessarily so, from the very fact that there is not twice or three times as much put with it. I might go on to show more particularly how and why this is so. But I have not the time, nor is it necessary. This is no new idea. It is one which wise men recognize and act upon everywhere in other matters. Time, money, labor, anything in order to be expended with true *economy* must be expended in *quantities* somewhere *near* commensurate with the greatness of the work to be accomplished. The bad economy of keeping one man at work three weeks upon a job which *three* men working together would accomplish in as many days—on the plea that it would "cost so much" to hire the extra help, would be apparent to every one. And yet not so wonderfully unlike it seems to be the policy of the state with reference to the improvement of her schools and hardly more reasonable the complaints which many make that the school law accomplishes so little. How could it be expected to accomplish much? Why shouldn't it fail? Hardly one of the officers under it but must do what he does, at a positive sacrifice to himself, while everybody seems to feel at perfect liberty to throw all the blocks and hindrances in the way possible, and then wonder and complain that the law is so insufficient, such a useless expense and must be repealed. The wonder is that it accomplishes anything, and the fact that so little comparatively of what needs to be done has been accomplished by it, is only an additional argument for larger effort and larger outlay. There is a great work to be done and it must be done whatever the cost, and the sooner we put forth efforts in some degree commensurate to the greatness of the work to be done, the more effectually and *economically* too, it will be done.

Most of our school districts have the usual annual "squabble" in regard to having wood and board on the scholar or Grand List. Why won't the Legislature "fix" that and so put an end, not only to all these troubles, but to not a few in the schools themselves.

G. B. TOLMAN, Sheldon.

---

The schools in the several districts of St. Albans have been well sustained during the past year, although in most of the districts the number of scholars has not been up to the usual average. Females, for the most part, have been employed as teachers, owing to the fact that so many of our young men have enlisted in the army.

There has been but little done for the improvement of our school houses and the surrounding grounds, which I regret, because I think that the good taste of handsome, commodious, well arranged, well ordered buildings, adorned with trees in the yard, exerts an important influence upon a certain part of the culture of our children. This is exemplified in the effect of the beautiful structure erected in District No. 4, which comprehends the village, upon the pupils who attend it. There you will see neatness, cleanliness, regularity, instead of disorder, love of mischief and dirt. The very proprieties of the building seem to inspire both teachers and scholars with emulation to preserve it from desecration and misuse.

The graded schools in District No. 4, have been in very successful operation this year, and besides the advantages of common school education, offer facilities of instruction to those who wish to pursue the higher branches of study, and what is of great consequence in the present exigency of our country, give ample opportunities to our daughters to fit themselves to become the educators of the youth of the land. While our young men have gone to the war, our young women must take their places in the public schools.

CHARLES FAY, St. Albans.

---

On the whole, I think the schools throughout the town have been, during the last twelve months, a little in advance of those of preceding years.

Our graded school, which consists of three distinct grades, thus far works well; and, I trust, in the end it will prove to be a complete success.

As the figures, which I send you, will speak for themselves, I am freed from the necessity of adding extended remarks. I may, however, briefly call attention to one point in the school law which I think should be modified. As the statute now stands a portion of the public money, as you are aware, is divided to the several districts according to the average daily attendance of the pupils of such district. This regulation really holds out to each district a premium for the shortest schools possible in consistency with the other provisions of the law. It would doubtless be better, if the statute were so amended, as to require this portion of the public money to be divided to the several districts according to the aggregate attendance of the pupils of said districts upon the schools within their respective limits. The law as thus modified would extend due encouragement to all such districts as are willing to sustain schools a greater number of months in the year than they are now positively required to sustain.

J. B. PERRY, Swanton.

---

In my written report to the annual town meeting, I stated my opinion that our public schools could never rise to their full usefulness till the people feel interest enough in them to look after them, and know what their employes are doing and attend to them as they do to other business. How natural the impression of a teacher, that if employers do not take sufficient interest in business to look or even inquire after the doings of the employed it makes but little difference how they spend their time, if they but get their board and wages. Grand-Isle has been fortunate in getting good teachers the past year; but the great want of interest on the part of parents may be seen by the great number of tardy marks in the Registers. About one-sixth of the entire attendance is thus marked, and in two or three of the schools, where the teachers were apt to be late. I notice there were the most tardy scholars, and where the teachers were always prompt and began school precisely at the hour, the scholars were generally of the same spirit—showing the great influence of habits on the young mind. And I believe promptness a proper and necessary subject of discussion in the Institutes.

Boarding around, that relic of back-woods life, is another evil of our schools. A teacher should be regular in his meals, sleep, and other habits, to be uniform and even in school arrangements; and no teacher can keep a school regular unless the example comes from the teacher. Breakfast at all hours from six to nine o'clock, and as much variation in the hours of rising and retiring must necessarily derange a

person's mind for the duties of teaching, and disorder in teacher is disorder in scholars. Boarding around also disables a teacher, in some of his boarding places, at least, from giving that attention to the studies of the pupils which is always required.

The way in which fuel is furnished in some of our schools—each man drawing a load of green or wet wood when he chooses, if he chooses to at all—and sometimes no one choosing to do it, in which case the teacher has to dismiss the school till wood comes, (another disgraceful relic of back-woods life,) is a great detriment to our schools, which should be done away with, and as good and dry fuel as the people have at their own doors should be furnished and covered for the school house. Unless a house is comfortable, better have no school and save giving children a dread and dislike of school. All the school houses in town are comfortable, but none of them are well arranged and well furnished. One district in town has had no winter school for three or four years past, but has had five or six months summer school. All the other districts have schools a reasonable share of the year.

Cutting, marking, and otherwise marring the benches and furniture of the school house has formerly been a custom of the scholars in this town; and at the examination of teachers I have enjoined upon them the protection of the school houses and furniture from such depredations, and that I should *insist* on a strict compliance. The effect is plainly visible in all our school houses, no new defacements to be found the past year. I believe the enforcement of such a rule by every Superintendent would result not only in saving property, but in checking the disposition to mar and destroy which is so apt to prevail in boys.

The first *public* examinations of teachers in this town, I believe, were held the past year, and a very good attendance at both of them appeared to have a good effect upon both teachers and scholars, as well as on the people, and I believe public examinations are well calculated to stimulate and arouse the people to a greater interest in the schools, and might well be made a condition of the Superintendent drawing pay for his services.

All the Registers appear to be correctly and properly filled out by both teachers and clerks, excepting the items of board and fuel, which, in some districts, are noted as part of the expenses paid out, and others not, being in both cases furnished by the citizens.

J. A. CHAMBERLIN. Grand Isle.

---

The schools in this town are very few in number, and consequently I need have but little to say in regard to them. The school houses will compare favorably with those of other towns. They have not much pretension to elegance, but are convenient and substantial. There seems to be an increased and laudable interest manifested by parents in our schools. The teachers for the past year have been persons of intelligence, who have done their duty with a zeal and faithfulness which has given general satisfaction, and a marked improvement plainly manifests itself. The average daily attendance is small, which may be attributed to the diseases among children which prevailed during the winter term. Irregularity of attendance, tardiness, and absences, are a great evil in our schools and should be overcome.

HENRY C. HILL, Isle La Mott.

---

There is one feature in our school law which might be easily altered, and greatly to the advantage of all the permanent interests of education. As the law now is, teachers who have taught successfully for five, ten or twenty years, are compelled to go from one town to another, and not unfrequently twice in the some year, to the public examinations to procure a certificate of qualifications, or run their chance of obtaining one, or the endorsement of the one obtained in their own town, after they commence their school, from the good will and pleasure of the town Superintendent of the town where they are teaching. This is a needless expense and a great annoyance to an earnest and conscientious teacher. It drives many of our best teachers in disgust from the teacher's vocation, or out of the State.

Why not constitute in each County a Board of Town Superintendents to meet annually at each of your County Institutes, to examine candidates for the teacher's profession, and grant to every worthy applicant a certificate signed by the Secretary of the Board of Education, and sealed with the seal of the State, to be of perpetual validity in the State? Why not elevate the teacher's profession in this respect to the level of other professions? Why not use every means to elevate it, rather than a *single one* to belittle? Every reasonable method should be adopted to keep our best teachers in our schools and in the State, and not our poorest. The experience of intelligent manhood and womanhood is more valuable for all the beneficial and and permanent interests of our common schools, than the trial efforts of mere boys and girls.

EDWIN WHEELOCK, Cambridge.

---

Our teachers during the year have been females; and but two of them have proved indifferent teachers. The suggestion I made last year I would now repeat: The clerks should receive a moderate compensation. Some of them might be inefficient even then; still that would be a stimulant to greater efficiency, which is very much needed. I feel the delicacy of asking any modification of a law so suited to its purpose as our school law is; yet if this could be done it would be attended with much good.

JAMES DOUGHERTY, Johnson.

---

It is hardly possible to overestimate the importance of common school education. Fortunately for the good people of Vermont, we have *now* a common school system, which, though not perfect, is winning its way to public favor, and is worthy of commendation and support. Retrenchment may be necessary in the present condition of the affairs of our country, and hence has it advocates. This, however, may be carried too far or prosecuted in an unwise direction. If we cannot advance in perfecting this system as rapidly as is desired, it is hoped that no backward step will be taken. In sustaining our present system we of necessity make some advance. It is impossible to remain stationary in any department of labor or of morals; there will, if scarcely any effort is made to retain our present standing, be a drifting backward. By judicious efforts to act in accordance with the requirements of the system adopted, a forward movement is necessarily made. This is particularly true of our common school system.

Some, at first view, are inclined to think that the system is too complicated; that, as it is sometimes remarked, there is too much machinery about it. The machinery, however, if such it may be called, is calculated to be worked by the various classes interested, and it is admirably arranged to this end as will be perceived on examination.

It has passed into a proverb that, "until parents can be made to watch over every step of the child's education with the deepest solicitude that springs from a true knowledge of its importance, our system will be virtually defective." But parents may have all necessary solicitude on this subject, and still, without some plan that will aid them, their anxiety will not be of much avail. That children may receive the greatest possible benefit from the school, it is necessary that they should be present punctually and regularly. And here we have one of the greatest obstacles which, in many schools, is a hindrance to success and usefulness. It is not to be expected that scholars will receive all the benefit the school can afford, unless they are present all the time. But without some plan or arrangement to this end the absence and tardiness of scholars would hardly be considered as working much injury, and their injuriousness, whatever it might be, would escape the observations of parents. And here we perceive the advantage of school Registers. In the first place, they discover the evil, they show at once what it is and where it is. And this is the first step towards improvement, to ascertain the defects which require attention. When the Register is kept as it is designed to be, it communicates to parents needed in-

formation of a very useful character. They learn at once what is the habit of their children when they pass from their immediate observation. They cannot always follow their children to the school room. But they can go occasionally, and when present examine the record of attendance. Preventive is far better than cure, hence they should go while the Term is in progress, and not wait till its close. And they are expected and required to do this, it is part and parcel of the system. And when parents generally do this, an important step will be taken in improving the efficiency and usefulness of our schools. They should go and examine for themselves.

This irregularity and unpunctuality of attendance is a topic in all school Reports of Superintendents, and these ought to be abated at once. The people of the State are inconsistent with themselves in allowing this evil to continue. Our enterprising citizens go to their labor in the field, shop, study, or elsewhere, in due season, and they are particularly careful to have all persons in their employment commence their labor in due time and continue it until the hour for closing arrives. The same promptness and punctuality should be maintained by all our scholars when attending school. Parents should exercise a careful supervision over this matter, and, by acting with the teachers and Superintendents, the work of improvement will be regularly and surely promoted. The scholars' names are all enrolled, and the cases should be rare for a pupil not to be in his or her place at roll-call. It is very desirable that a reform should take place in the particular now the subject of remark, and it is believed that it may be accomplished, and then when all the scholars in our schools are habitually present in due season the work of each day will be much better done. In this connection I take pleasure in stating that the use of the Register in the schools of Bradford, particularly for two years past, has been of beneficial effect in promoting a laudable spirit of emulation in the teachers, scholars and citizens. Parents and other friends of education have visited the schools, and by their presence, advice, encouragement and affectionate persuasion have promoted a moral and intellectual excitement among the scholars of great efficacy and benefit.

Teachers' Institutes are no longer an experiment as an agency in promoting the interests of popular education. Schools for teachers were established some years since in those foreign countries distinguished for their attention to the interests of education, and there, as well as in our own country, with the happiest results. The Institutes until Normal Schools are established should be well sustained. The time devoted to them, two days at each session, is rather limited. Could it not be increased to five days?

JOSHUA BRITTON, Bradford.

---

Irregularity in the attendance of scholars wastes nearly half the money expended in our schools. I have found a majority of the teachers applying for license not qualified according to law; but public opinion will not tolerate their rejection. The provisions of the law must not be made the standard. And yet a teacher licensed for one of our most backward schools, and receiving only one dollar per week for the services rendered, may use that license to secure any other school in town during the term of one year from date. Should not the law be so modified that a license shall be required for each school taught?

H. D. HODGE, Braintree.

---

As a whole the schools in Brookfield the past year, have been more than ordinarily successful. One evil that needs perhaps to be corrected, is, the too general disposition to introduce teachers into the work too young. They often commence at fifteen or sixteen years of age. If their mental acquisitions at that age are sufficient to warrant a certificate, the result proves too often that they are wanting in maturity of judgment. If they fail for want of this in their first effort, it has a tendency to discourage all future attempts. The character of a teacher should be mature, the judgment sound.

Besides the ordinary routine of visiting schools, I arranged for a common school celebration of the "glorious fourth." All the schools in town were largely represented. It awakened great interest. More than 1000 people were present. Ad-

dresses were made by several individuals. This was a grand day for the little folks.

Arrangements were also made for a public exhibition in spelling and geography near the close of the winter term. It created a lively interest among parents and children, and was attended by a large concourse of people. There was some opposition to this arrangement, to which I replied in my report to the town, and that part of my report I will here transcribe:

As a town you are expending large sums of money yearly in support of schools. Your object and aim is to educate your children to fit them for the duties of life that they may be respectable in the spheres in which they may be called to move. It is to be supposed that common sense and common views of economy would lead you to desire the greatest amount of good by this outlay of money. Is not this in accordance with Yankee notions? It is manifest, however, to every attentive observer, that a vast amount of money is as good as thrown away in our educational system. There is a great deal of looseness about it, and human nature being the same everywhere, it will crop out, as the geologist would say, in various ways. Man is naturally indolent, and will not exert himself without a motive. He needs some stimulant to effort. In the arrangements of society this is apparent. Many a man if he had not a family to support, would be a drone. Teachers are human; they may be tempted. If not positively idle, they may become inefficient, and this spirit will soon bear sway in a school room; and both teacher and scholar accomplish very little. They may slide along through a term of three months with hardly any perceptible improvement.

Now something like what we have attempted the last two years affords in the judgment of your superintendent, the required stimulant; the motive power to exertion on the part of teachers and scholars. It operates as powerfully upon the former as upon the latter. A teacher, if he or she is of the right stamp, will be ambitious to have the school appear well over which he or she may have presided. The scholars will have that spirit infused into them. They will exert themselves. And this influence, brought to bear upon a school term after term, and year after year. will be found to have advanced it far beyond what would otherwise be the case.

Nor is the influence of such exhibitions confined to teachers and scholars during school hours. The parents feel it, and every child in the family is stimulated to exertion.

"Nothing perhaps more surely promotes vigorous habits of study," says an intelligent teacher, "and efficient scholarship than a laudable and healthful spirit of emulation, tending as it does, to remove from the mind of the scholar that superficiality so much to be dreaded, and so difficult to be eradicated. To promote this, something more is needed than the ordinary routine of school life. Nothing more certainly brings about carelessness on the part of the teacher and indolence on the part of the scholar, than a lurking impression that nobody will ever know whether they have accomplished anything or not. Therefore a *public* test of the acquirements of the scholar is just the thing to bring about the end so much desired. So far as my experience extends, I can heartily commend such exhibitions as most efficient.

DAVID PERRY, Brookfield.

---

There has been no important change in the condition of the school houses in this town since my last report, and I will only add to what was then said of them, that with a few exceptions, they are too much restricted in room about the buildings, the lots being in several cases just the size of the house and bodering on the highway.

There appears to have been very little disposition to combine the useful with the agreeable, on the part of those to whom were intrusted the location and erection of our school houses.

The school registers I consider a valuable part of our present school system, serving as they do to collect a fund of valuable information and exerting a direct influence on the schools for their improvement. And the teachers deserve much credit for the neatness and accuracy with which they have kept them. Some have gone even beyond the requirements of the registers and kept an accurate account of the perfect and imperfect lessons of each pupil.

There is need of a more ample provision for the special training of teachers for their work. A Normal School in which our teachers could be placed under the tuition of the most successful instructors in the State, would be of vast benefit to the common schools. The Teachers' Institutes have served a valuable purpose in this direction, though restricted to so short a time at each session as to preclude an extended system of instruction. The parsimony which withheld the appropriation for the support of the Institutes the coming year was the reverse of economy, and I hope the friends of education will not allow the State to be deprived of the benefits of them by this neglect on the part of our legislators.

One of the indications of improvement in our common schools is a better classification. The number of extra classes occasioned by a diversity of text books has diminished fifty per cent. within one year, and the whole number of classes in the schools has been reduced from 290 to 243 within the same time. There is also an increase in the number of visits to the schools by prudential committees, which with other manifestations of a growing interest in the subject of common schools, give evidence that they are making some progress towards the position they deserve to occupy among the educational institutions of our country.

PERLEY CHANDLER, Chelsea.

---

With very few exceptions, our schools the past year have been under the care of skillful and successful teachers. Very good progress has been made by the scholars in the different branches taught. Two or three schools I think might be termed model schools. I am very sorry to find a general inclination to neglect reading and spelling, on the part of the scholars. We have twenty-four organized school districts in town, making some of the schools very small. But I think the size of the schools not so great and objection, provided competent teachers are employed. For some of our best schools are in our smallest districts; simply because first class teachers have been employed. We have some very good school houses, but all lack one very important thing, viz: a pleasant play ground for the children.

I would recommend that every district provide their school house with a clock, and out-line maps, also dictionaries.

G. W. SCOTT, Corinth.

---

The past year has been one of harmony and general success in the schools of this town. The Institute that was held here in the spring by the Secretary of the Board of Education was instrumental in awakening an increased interest in behalf of the improvement of our common schools, and also of inspiring those teachers who attended it with a greater enthusiasm in their work. Yet there is a great amount of apathy and indifference relating to the importance of our system of education remaining on the public mind that needs to be removed. This is seen in the fact that many parents in affluent circumstances will consent to send their children from term to term to school houses old and dilapidated, and not having the first pleasant and inviting thing about them. And also districts of abundant wealth unwilling to spend a few dollars to obtain the apparatus so necessary to furnish a school room. Farmers who seek the best implements of their occupation that can possibly be obtained, and save their strength and time by labor-saving machines regardless of large sums of money invested (and wisely too) in tools of modern improvement, will be found voting against all measures for improvement in their school houses and their necessary appendages.

And still we rejoice that public sentiment is gradually and steadily changing for the better. The various plans put into execution by recent legislative enactments which have been viewed with suspicion and, in many cases with strong opposition, are now appreciated as wise and useful. We are happy to notice one special feature in the school law which has already secured general favor. We allude to the act which has secured such complete and permanent uniformity of text books for our entire State. By this measure our schools and the community find themselves

saved from a vast amount of annoyance and expense which was realized in former days. And we trust the day is rapidly approaching when our commonwealth will become justly celebrated for its complete and efficient system of education carried into successful operation.

A. G. BUTTON, Newbury.

---

The schools in this town during the past year have been quite successful. But there is a great lack of interest on the part of parents. The school houses, with the exception of three or four are in a dilapidated condition. Some are almost a disgrace to the educational interests of the town. They are wholly unfit for school houses. Again, there is not a globe or outline map in town that belongs to the schools. Both are very essential to the welfare of a school. The compensation offered for teaching will not procure good, thorough teachers, and the great difficulty is that the prudential committees are too apt to hire those that they can get the cheapest. And the result is, *they are the dearest.* There is a large field open for improvement. The parents think too much of their money to make the schools as good as they should be. They do not visit them during the term and do not know whether they have a good school or not, and consequently, for this reason fail in getting good teachers and in making the needful provisions and arrangements for the school. But I trust the day is not far distant, when the people of this locality will arouse from their present slumbers and awake to the cause of education. The working of the school law is felt and seen in most of our schools, and it is encouraging to those who are interested in the educational interests of Vermont to know that we are favored with a law so practical in its workings and so beneficial in its results.

N. A. SANBORN, Orange.

---

The schools in town this year I think have been quite an average, and perhaps somewhat of an improvement on former years. There have been no failures on the part of teachers, though in the case of several a decided improvement might have been made. The registers, in most cases, have been tolerably well kept by the teachers, but imperfectly by the clerks generally. Indeed I find more cause of complaint against parents who grow captious and fault-finding because their children are suitably corrected, than against the teachers who perform the work. *Order must be had in school;* and those parents who entertain the complaints of their children, and abuse the teacher whenever they receive a slight correction, foster a spirit of insubordination in the minds of their children very injurious to them as well as prejudicial to the schools.

As a means of obtaining more correct reports from the district clerks, I would recommend a strict enforcement of the law against them whenever and wherever they are delinquent. This is not now generally done, and they are emboldened to continue on in their careless and unbusiness-like ways.

If we would have better schools, we must try in every possible way to make every person concerned do their duty.

MARK POWERS. Strafford.

---

The cause of common school education may well be regarded, in the United States, as the cause of humanity; it is indeed the great fountain of true purity, intelligence and worldy prosperity. It may well be likened to a river starting from a thousand little springs scattered all over our country. It does not long remain humble and insignificant, but presently gathers strength and rolls along a majestic tide, purifying with its waters, enriching with its commerce, and gladdening every shore with its reflected sunlight. In this home of liberty and equality there is no ruling authority like the common school. No bench of learned judges contribute so much to good conduct and fair dealing among men. No vigilant patriot is so jealous of foes without and foes within. And no other glory will beam upon the

far-off nations of the earth with such a life-giving radiance. Popular liberty, equal laws, general happiness seem to us impossible to be maintained for any long time in an uneducated community. A common school is the place before all others for germinating those latent powers of the soul. Here the mischievous feeling that some one was born to rule, and others to obey, is stifled in the bud, mind here enters into competition with mind, all social differences and family distinctions are laid down at the door of the free school. Mind and heart, the soul alone—the essential man, has consideration within the walls where free men are bred to knowledge, virtue and purity. Then let every one do something for the cause of education. Let us seize occasions, court occasions, and make occasions for this personal exertion and usefulness. The main difficulty is to begin; the work will win upon the heart as we pursue it. It is blessed to receive, it is more blessed to give.

S. M. GLEASON, Thetford.

---

The effect of our present school law is having its good results in this town. Better teachers present themselves to instruct the young. A better system of conducting schools is adopted, and a greater desire to compete with other schools and teachers, so that a more rapid improvement is noticed thereby. I am fully satisfied that some more stringent system should be adopted respecting the public examination of teachers. The idea of paying fifty cents for failing to appear in public examination, does not, in my opinion, have the desired effect. No doubt there are Superintendents who like the extra fee of fifty cents, yet, cannot there be some way devised so that applicants must necessarily be present on public examinations in order to be licensed as a teacher. I notice one great change among our people in the number of visitors that call upon the schools, especially by the Prudential Committees in the several districts of our town. By my report you will notice sixteen visits by Prudential Committees, and by others two hundred and ninety-eight. This is a great change from what it formerly was prior to the present school regulations. Let the friends of education still be united in the good cause, and the schools of Vermont will not be second to any in the country.

L. H. TABOR, Topsham.

---

The Teachers' Institutes for this County were held so far from here and at a time of year that I could not attend them, but many of our teachers have attended them, and they manifest a degree of interest for a thorough system of education in our common schools which is worthy of notice.

Your annual reports are working a great change in the minds of those who are careless and indifferent about our common schools, for no intelligent person can read them without becoming interested in them, and having their minds more awake to the interest of the education of their children. The worst trouble is, they are sent to the District Clerk and there they remain, and not one in ten of the inhabitants of the district ever read or see them. I think that every voter, at least, should read them.

R. H. DREW, Tunbridge.

---

You earnestly recommend an expression of facts and opinions. The school law is just coming to be appreciated by some of our people. The most intelligent part of them look upon it really as an educating system of itself, both to parents and teachers. Another class cannot bear its workings because of its complexity.

Holding the opinion that our female teachers have the best natural and acquired qualifications to instruct children and youth, I have taken special pains to impress it on the minds of parents and scholars. Having the advantage of the absence of most of the male teachers, and the fact that females would teach for less wages, it was comparatively an easy matter to divorce the people from an old cus-

tom, and secure lady teachers for our schools. During the past school year only one male teacher was employed in Washington schools, and he taught but eight weeks. This change has given great satisfaction to most of our people, and has been particularly gratifying to those whose valuable labors have never before been so highly appreciated and compensated. I am almost persuaded to write an essay on the subject of lady teachers. In the school room female labor is rapidly superseding that of male. And allow me to say to you, that, as a rightful and acknowledged leader in educational reform, you have no one higher or more well defined duty than to aid in securing this important change. Knowing something of your ideas of teaching, I dare say you entertain similar views to the above. At my first visits of all the schools in town, at both summer and winter terms, I announced to the scholars and teachers that near the close of each school there would be an examination of the scholars in the several branches taught in the schools. And that after a careful and impartial comparison of the standing of the different classes, I should report those of the best and second best progress, as the best and second best classes in town, and would also report the district and teacher in connection with the names of the scholars composing said classes. I mention this for the purpose of recommending it to Superintendents as a plan which will not fail to interest, excite, and highly improve our common schools. By this simple method, in only one year's time, the schools of this town have been improved more than fifty per cent. Most of the scholars appeared to attend school for a new purpose. School duties were not irksome, but pleasant tasks. A zeal and an interest in study became quite intense and unabated. Teachers and parents alike engaged in the work, and most excellent results followed. The very much improved condition of many of our schools has created a demand for better teachers. Thanks to the increasing intelligence of the children. Parents may secure the services of poor and cheap teachers, but if the intelligence of the scholars is sufficient, they will not submit, but will necessitate such a state of things as will bring to their aid one qualified to instruct them.

Although the scholars in town have made excellent progress in their studies the past year, I regret to inform you that they were deprived of very many of those school means and conveniences which are not only important but indispensable to their greater advancement in study, and higher, better culture.

GEO. F. SMITH, Washington.

---

In regard to school Registers, I consider them of the utmost importance, not only to the public at large but also to the district, teacher and scholar. As every member of a district can, by reference to it, see by a glance the condition of the school nearly as well as if he had been present every day during the term, the teacher will have a stronger incentive to duty. Not long since I heard a teacher say he could as well dispense with a blackboard as a register. The scholars will have a stronger inducement to "be present in season and out of season," and to shape their conduct in such a manner as they would like to have held up before the public.

As far as my observations have extended, I find those teachers who have attended the Institutes most, have succeeded best. Many ideas there received when reduced to practice in their schools, have resulted in perceptible benefit. I wish the next one for this County might be held in this town, if practicable: if not, in this immediate vicinity, so that more of our teachers might avail themselves of its benefits.

Who can fail to see the good resulting from submitting annually a report of all the schools for the consideration of the citizens of each town. Greater care will be taken by the teacher in the management and instruction of their school, and a greater effort will be made to create an interest and sustain it to the close of the term, if they expected to be reported, than if not. I think every town would be amply repaid by placing a printed copy of such report in the hands of every parent, to be examined at his leisure. And I would be glad to see the State send-

[illegible] a bound copy of all the reports to every town, so that by an interchange of thought each Superintendent could profit by the others.

H. S. DAVENPORT, Williamstown.

---

I think we can truly report a growing interest in the cause of our common schools.

A few years since not a district in town owned a convenient and comfortable school house. Now we have eight good substantial buildings, and hope to erect three new houses this year. Many of the prominent citizens of the town attended our last public examination, and seemed gratified to learn the ability and qualification of those they had employed as instructors of their children.

Committees have kindly assisted our female teachers in governing their schools. Many of the teachers have performed their parts admirably. The school registers are in better condition than last year, still there is chance for improvement. We have been favored with one session of the Teachers' Institutes, and I believe it the principal agent in providing twelve of our female teachers with steady boarding places the past year. In visiting schools and witnessing the operations of our most successful teachers, I find that they have greatly improved their own system or method of teaching by acting upon the practical hints and suggestions of our Secretary of the Board of Education.

J. M. WALBRIDGE, Albany.

---

In general I would say that our schools have been more prosperous the past year than usual, and, considered as a whole, I think have been very good and have given general satisfaction. Yet there is a great chance for improvement. Our teachers, all but two or three, have had considerable experience in teaching, and have evinced a good degree of interest and energy in their business, although I think some have lacked in not being as thorough as they should have been.

Tardiness and absence from school, I am sorry to say, have been far more frequent than there is any possible excuse for. Difference in time-pieces is often one cause, and teachers may often be to blame, but I think parents are, on the whole greatly to blame for it, and some for the most trifling excuse will keep their children from school every now and then, and then wonder why they have not progressed better during the school, and often blame the teacher. I regard it of the utmost importance to scholar and teacher that he is regular in his attendance at school. In looking over the school registers I find but few visits from parents to the schools. When will the time comes when parents will take more interest in the education of their children. I think but few realize the beneficial influence of their presence in the school room from time to time during a term of school, for I know if they did they would oftener visit it.

Parents ought to visit a term of school at least twice,—once at the beginning, and once at or near the close; then they can judge understandingly of each school.

I think a fair compensation has been given teachers in our town this year for the hard times, and most of the districts have adopted the only true plan, I believe that is to support the schools on the Grand List, and I wish they would adopt the plan of giving their teachers a steady boarding place.

The more intelligent part of the community are favorable to Teachers' Institutes, and would regret to see them go down.

DANIEL SKINNER, Brownington.

---

My observation of the schools during the past year has shown me more clearly than ever before the evils that grow out of the existence of numerous and small districts. In one school only seven scholars were present on the day of my visit, and the average attendance during the entire winter was less than six. It was almost a matter of course to find such a school taught by a cheap teacher and in a

miserable house. In fact the miserable condition of the school house was in part the occasion of the smallness of the school, as some parents refused to send their children to a house so dilapidated that it was not possible to keep them from suffering with the cold during the severe days of our northern winters. But in the most favorable circumstances, the school could not be otherwise than small, as there were only twenty-six in the district between four and eighteen years of age. In an adjoining fractional district the average attendance for the year was only sixteen, and the whole number of scholars thirty-seven. A consolidation of the two districts would enable the new district to provide a new school house and to employ a higher grade of teachers, while the average attendance of scholars would not exceed, even if it equalled, what an enterprising teacher could do justice to. In each of two other adjoining districts, the average attendance was twelve, the whole number of scholars being twenty in one district, and twenty-five in the other. In these four small districts were four school houses, four teachers, four sets of officers, and a general fourfoldness of labor and expenses, at least half of which might be saved by consolidation, while what was expended could be expended to much better purpose. Nor are the unnecessary labors and expenses the only or even the chief evils of small districts. Unless the teacher of a small school have more than an average sense of the dignity and responsibility of his office, he cannot engage in his labors with that enthusiasm which is essential to the highest success. His work will almost of necessity be task-work, and that of the dullest and dreariest kind. As little will the scholars be able to exercise the generous emulation which awakens ambition, stimulates diligence, and makes study a delight as well as a duty. The scholar will easily content himself to be only "next to the head," so long as there is "nobody in the class but me and a little girl."

In regard to the advantages to be derived from Teachers' Institutes no one can have any doubt who will give the subject an intelligent and unprejudiced consideration. What teachers in general lack is not a competent knowledge of the studies pursued in the common schools, but skill in imparting that knowledge and inducing the pupils to acquire it for themselves. It by no means follows that a well educated man is a good teacher. On the contrary it quite often happens that he is excelled as a teacher by one who is much inferior to him in scholarship, but who has an "aptness to teach," in which he is deficient. This aptness to teach may be a natural gift, it may be the result of experience in teaching, it may be acquired by receiving instruction in the art of teaching. To afford this instruction is the object of the Institute. The teacher who has had large experience may perhaps be in less need of attending the Institute, though even he can hardly fail to be profited by attendance upon it. But for the teacher who is quite fresh in his work or has had only small experience in it, I regard the Institute as almost indispensable. The helplessness of a teacher in his first school would often be ludicrous to behold, if pity for him and his unfortunate pupils did not overcome the sense of the ridiculous. He knows, it may be, what he ought to do, but *how to do it* is an altogether different thing. He proceeds at random, or experimentally, he loses time and patience, and self respect, while he is learning his profession by attempting to practice it. Much of this might be avoided by attendance upon Teachers' Institutes, where he could avail himself of the experience of others, without passing through the mortifications by which that experience has been gained, and where practical instruction in the art of teaching is given by those who, having tried different ways, are qualified to decide which are the best. Such attendance would also cultivate an *esprit d' corps* among teachers and make them and make each one anxious, not merely for his own improvement, but that of his profession. These remarks are prompted and justified by my observation of the very marked difference between the teachers in this town who have often attended Teachers' Institutes, and those who have so done rarely or not at all. The superior excellence of the former has been obvious at a glance. The discontinuation of the Teachers' Institutes I should consider the most serious calamity that could befall the cause of common schools in Vermont. They are the driving wheels, without which the engine, with all its precious burden of freight, must stand still.

The system of school registration I regard as of very high importance. The same reasons that induce the merchant to take his annual account of stock, and the nation its decennial census, require that the annual statistics of our schools should be gathered, collated and summed up. Without so doing, we can only guess at things which we need to know with mathematical exactness. We cannot know what is the present condition of our schools, nor whether they are improving or retrograding, either as a whole or in any particular localities, without the data which are furnished by the school registers. Neither is it possible to devise judiciously and execute successfully plans for the improvement of schools without the precise knowledge of deficiencies which the registers afford. The statistics, indeed, are not perfectly accurate and reliable, but a somewhat familiar acquaintance with many kinds of statistics, justifies me in saying that these are quite as reliable as statistics generally are. They never can be perfect until all teachers and clerks are actuated, either by a love of statistics or a conscientious regard to their legal obligations, to do punctiliously their entire duty in that regard; and this, although a "consumation most devoutly to be wished," is one that is not likely to be experienced just at present. But the system is valuable just as it is, and can be made more and more valuable by improvements which will be adopted as their necessity becomes apparent. Some slight suggestions for such improvements I will take occasion to make before the work for another year commences.

PLINY H. WHITE, Coventry.

---

I am happy to report a decided improvement and an increased interest in our schools during the year; and this becomes far more gratifying and encouraging, when we take into account the greatly disturbed condition of our national affairs, and the consequent derangement in every branch of business, through every grade of society. I believe our people are beginning to realize the worth of our free schools, and to see in part their relation to the growth, strength, and permanency of our nation. I regard this as the important step toward desired reform, and if from the "fiery ordeal" through which we are now passing, our people should be thoroughly taught this important truth, our sore affliction will prove our highest good, and no fears of a recurrence of these evils need ever in future alarm us.

There have been in town during the year several very fine schools, while nearly all have been of a higher order than usual, as is fully proved, I think, by statistics. These show an increase of eight weeks of school, and an aggregate gain of 1820 days attendance, while the number attending school at all was six less. There have been 1841 less instances of tardiness, 24 more without absence, and, more encouraging than all else, 15 more visits by committees and 60 more by parents. Our schools have been better taught, more thoroughly disciplined, and more generally sustained. The result is in many respects visible. A deeper and more heart felt interest in the cause is being daily manifested; our teachers, receiving greater encouragement, are becoming more zealous and active; our school registers are more neatly and correctly kept, and I may safely say the mass of the people regard more favo rably our system of school laws and regulations, though occasionally some indolent clerk or more indolent teacher is heard complaining and denouncing the vast machinery which encumbers it. This feeling is, however, fast disappearing under the strong influence exerted by educational meetings and discussions and by the annual reports which to a greater or less degree find their way about the districts and leave their impress for good. I am daily convinced of the necessity of keeping the public mind constantly and thoroughly agitated upon all these matters of school reform, and I fully believe that in this way alone will the desired end be secured.

Here lies the power of the teacher, as well as of every true friend of the cause. "A continual dripping will wear the hardest stone;" so by continual preaching, followed by active and faithful labor, may the friends of true educational reform alone hope to lift the veil of darkness from a majority of our people, and effectually force upon their beclouded and almost deadened hearts the important duties they owe their fellow men, their country, and especially their own offspring; and

awaken them fully to a just appreciation of their individual responsibility in this great work of improvement and reform. Well may we rejoice as we catch even a few feeble rays of dawning light, and this even in this dark hour of our nation's extremity.

DAVID N. CAMP, 2ND, Derby.

---

The Teachers' Institute held in this town last November made decidedly a good impression on the community in general, but more especially on the teachers.

In visiting the schools, I found the foot-prints of the Institute, in every instance where the teacher attended it. And influence for good has been so marked and apparent, that we should be much more anxious to have another Institute held here than we were before.

As to annual reports, it strikes me that they are indispensable to the greatest efficiency of our school system, especially if these reports could have something like a general circulation. The entire population need to become in some way identified with the educational interests of the State and to feel that a portion of the whole responsibility rests with each individual. It seems to me that it would be good economy to furnish every family with a copy at the expense of the State. We are confident that a decided improvement is manifest since the present school law came into operation. And it is also apparent that there is something gained annually in the efficiency of our system as the prejudices of the masses are worn away by a better acquaintance with the facts of the case.

NATHAN W. SCOTT. Glover.

---

My impression is, from my recent official operations, that common schools are considerably improved within the last few years. Houses are generally better. Teachers are of a higher grade. There is much improvement in books. More interest is felt by parents, and more care in procuring good teachers and in a willingness to pay them. Yet there is room.

ANDREW ROYCE, Greensboro.

---

There is a lack of interest in regard to the school register by the teachers and district clerks. Scholars should have it firmly enforced on their minds that it is no small thing not to receive a tardy, absent, or dismissal mark, and that habits of punctuality formed at school will go with them through life. If parents would take that interest in schools which they do in anything else for which they pay their money, we would soon see an increase of interest that would tell upon our schools gratifying to all. If they would but visit their children in school, and have teacher and scholar know that they considered education worth something, then the scholars would make progress, and parents by such visits would get their eyes open and we should not hear this grumbling about the cost, and we should have good teachers, good houses, good schools, or none, as it should be.

S. R. FLETCHER, Holland.

---

There is not enough *active* interest exhibited by the people in our schools. The people need a thorough *waking up*, as it requires something more than passive well-wishing to make our schools what they should be. Many of the houses are small, inconvenient and unpleasant, with only enough ground for the small building, and with nothing inside or out. This is an obstacle to obtaining such teachers as they need, and the scholars have lost much of their ambition and become careless and inattentive. The surroundings *do* and *will* make a vast difference in the interest and ambition of the scholars. Give them pleasant, inviting school rooms, and they will show their appreciation of them by increased interest and ambition. We have seen a few houses built within a few years which are improvements on the old, but they need a little further investment in enclosing a yard, in arranging

the ground, and in setting it out with trees. Our schools are all wanting in apparatus, such as outline maps, globes, clocks, thermometers, &c. Owing to the condition of our schools and perhaps other reasons, many of our wealthier people think that the common schools are of but little benefit, and thinking that they can send their children to some academy or higher school, too much neglect them. But the errors, whatever they may be, are not in the system, but in its workings, which an earnest co-operation among the people in the right direction, would soon remedy. Our district schools are our main safeguards against ignorance and vice. There the scholar learns the first rudiments, and forms his habits of study; and here if any where there should be the utmost pains taken in order that our schools may be thorough and our scholars form correct habits of study. And parents should know what kind of schools they are supporting by personal examinations. If parents would habitually visit their schools, it would stimulate the teachers to greater exertions and arouse the ambition of the scholars to show that this interest in their welfare was not in vain. When the people will unite in a hearty co-operation in the improvement of our schools, we may expect that, what are now beautiful theories, will become actual realities.

MILTON R. TYLER, Irasburgh.

---

I am satisfied that our common schools are not what they should be. I am led to believe that the fault lies mostly in the teachers. Many of them fail in government. Some have no system. Everything appears to be what it should not be. As it regards Teachers' Institutes I regard them as important auxiliaries in preparing teachers for the high and responsible position which they are called to fill. It is a fact well worthy of notice that those teachers who have attended these associations are the most successful in managing their schools. I am of the opinion that our State, as a whole, has done wrong in its legislative capacity in encouraging the establishment of so many academies. By it the standard of the qualifications of teachers will be lowered. It does not requre a very great amount of talent to become a teacher in one of these schools. The reason is obvious: they will not sustain such a teacher as the wants of our common schools demand. There is another thought which it may be well to notice. Is not orthogaphy and historical geography too much neglected? Does not the teaching of mathematics claim, or have more than its share of time?

I do not think our school law is yet perfect, but believe it is doing much good. The school Registers, when kept as they should be, work well. In closing, let me say that teaching should be made a profession. Many who teach are entirely destitute of a faculty to convey their ideas to others, and thereby render all of their doings worthless, which I believe might be remedied were it made a profession.

L. C. MOORE, Troy.

---

Parents should visit the schools that they may witness whatever is praiseworthy or censurable on the part of the children, and thus be able to encourage them in the former and deter them from a repetition of the latter. What teacher has not seen the countenances of his pupils brighten as they anticipate a visit from their parents, and witness with pleasure the laudable pride with which they resume their seats after the recitation of a well learned lesson in the presence of their parents? It seems to give fresh impulse to the blood through their youthful and buoyant hearts, and to inspire them with increased fidelity to go onward and upward in the path of science and virtue.

PERRY HITCHCOCK, Westfield.

---

As mind is the noblest gift of God, and the highest endowment of man, its improvement and cultivation becomes equally important, and equally binding and obligatory upon our race. The system of common schools, planned and instituted for this purpose by the wisdom and intelligence of our fathers, and most wisely

fitted and adapted by them for the attainment of this object, never has been aided and promoted in a way and manner equal and commensurate with the good accomplished, or the end to be obtained. The best institutions fall in the hands of indifference and neglect. The wisest and most practical provisions are powerless, unless backed and supported by a corresponding energy and determination of purpose. There is no interest in the community but what is promoted by the elevation of our common schools. A generally diffused intelligence among the people, is like the balmy breath of spring; the one gives force and activity to every virtue, the other animates and brings into life and being the rare beauties and rich varieties of vegetation. In order to elevate these schools and to reap the great rewards of their high cultivation, there must necessarily exist united, concerted action among the different parties composing them. The first party on the docket of our arrangement, and one figuring largely in the weal or woe of our district schools, is the people. Parents and guardians have never fully realized their influence in our schools, nor properly estimated their attitue and position in regard to them. Had they so done, had they always felt the necessity of having good schools, and been ever ready and willing to use their means and moral forces for their benefit and improvement, that moral and intellectual desolation pervading some sections of our State, particularly those localities in which a majority vote suspends all schools, never would have tarnished our history as a people, nor disgraced the records of our beloved commonwealth.

One great and leading fault among parents, in relation to schools, is their open censure and detraction of teachers in the presence of their children. This evil gnaws upon a teacher's influence, and though this upon the best interests of their schools, like a canker upon the vital springs of life. It is a consuming energy at the root of their every exertion. Even before a school is commenced, this unrelenting monster will make his appearance and effectually blast and wither the prospects and expectations of a teacher.

A good school as above intimated, requires union and harmony among the elements composing it. As the teacher is the main pillar in the fabric, any slanderous assault or damaging report endangers the foundation and threatens the superstructure thereon.

If these positions be established and fully acknowledged by the common sense of every living man, how can we reconcile the miserable, degrading practice of demoralizing our schools through such unfriendly report or vicious insinuation. There are always a class of persons in every district who are never satisfied with their schools. They may not intend the mischief they do. But time spent in proving their innocence would be very poorly employed. If their notions of an education are measured by their efforts to obtain it, either for themselves or their children, their appreciation of its advantages must be anything but flattering. Perhaps an unruly child has been restrained in its waywardness and the teacher compelled to enforce submission by a gentle application of the lash or ferule. The child of course is aggrieved, its parents are aroused, and no means are left untried to break and destroy the school. Many a school has been ruined in this way. Many a teacher has been hunted down by these mischievous, unfeeling patrons, with a vengance and vindictiveness ill suited to an age of reason and civilization. Now the cause of popular education demands that we sustain our teachers. They should be upheld and supported against the wiles and machinations of the ignorant and vicious. Order must be preserved in every school, and if mild and persuasive means fail to secure it, more forcible and energetic measures must be employed to accomplish it. This is the rule. Better far to sustain a teacher in a wrong than to openly censure and condemn them. Teachers may err; if so, treat them as human. Advise them in a spirit of kindness and friendship. Their labors are immense. Their trials and anxieties, under ordinary circumstances, are almost beyond endurance. Add to this the gall and bitternnss of neighborhood gossip; and to this the slanderous reports and personal insults of their enemies, and who can covet their pleasures, or desire their positions? And yet how essential that we have good teachers, and how great would be the calamity were their labors to cease.

A second party to a school is the teacher. No one is so directly responsible for its state and condition as the teacher. Influences not within their power to control, may, and often do, infringe largely upon its welfare and prosperity. But a wise, careful and dilligent teacher, one possessed of good administrative abilities, prudent in commanding and yet firm in enforcing, properly posted in the different departments of study and science, and well endowed with that most essential of all qualifications, good, solid common sense, will generally succeed. Difficulties may arise, but that patient forbearance and persevering energy which are ever found among our thorough, practical teachers, will devise some way or means for meeting and overcoming them. Hence the importance of an adequate preparation on the part of every individual who contemplates teaching. The occupation is truly a laborious one, and all who engage in it should fit and prepare themselves in a faithful and efficient manner before entering upon its duties. Many a school fails by employing young and inexperienced teachers. There must be a first effort it is true. But beginners should search out and engage only in small quiet districts. Prudential committees are very lax in this respect, hiring the first applicant without any regard to their age, fitness or qualification. Now for a young man or woman scarcely in their teens to engage in a large and difficult school, is not only foolishness, but consummate nonsense. As well might a private from the ranks assume the cares and labors of a Brigadier.

R. M. PHILLIPS. Castleton.

---

Parents and prudential committees seem to take more interest in schools than formerly in some districts in town, while in others, not a parent or committee man has visited a school during the year. There is a marked difference to be seen in these schools both in scholars and teachers.

There seems to be some reform needed in the examination of teachers in this town. Many of the teachers wish for private examinations and put it off till after the public examination for the reason, as I think, that they have not confidence enough in themselves to go through with a public examination. Such persons are not generally expected to have confidence enough in themselves to act the part of good teachers.

There has been only one term of school taught by a male teacher in town the past year, which I regard as a decided improvement, and I hope to report to you next year that only female teachers are employed in this town, as it is being conceded on all hands that woman is the best instructor of children and youth. They are not only more apt scholars and teachers, but give a better moral tone to all that come under their influence.

W. O. HARRISON, Chittenden.

---

As a general rule, those are the best and most successful teachers who have attended Teachers' Institutes. I believe the annual reports have had their influence in enlightening and stimulating the minds of some of the more intelligent people in town, that they are thus serving to prepare the way for wiser and better views in the whole community, and for improvement in school houses and in schools.

The school houses in town are mostly poor; some three or four of them old, bad ly arranged, and wholly unfit for use. The state of things in and around the school houses and in the school, was noted by the superintendent, at the time of his visit, and reported to the town meeting just as found. In his report to the town, after mentioning four school houses as very poor, and all badly located, the superintendent said: "These houses certainly ought not one of them to be used another *winter*. I am sure the property holders in these districts have not well considered how difficult, and indeed nearly impossible, it is for any teacher to keep a good school, with good order, in a poor, cold house, with seats and desks badly arranged;—facing in *all* directions, instead of all facing *one* way, as they ought, towards the teacher's desk, or table.

"That any school house should be without a good privy, or rather two,—one for

the boys, and one for the girls—is an outrage on humanity and decency—is literally a *shame*, for the tendency of it is to make the boys and girls, small and large —to make *your* sons and daughters, fellow citizens.—*indecent* and *shameless*."

I have some reason to think the report has produced some effect: for there is at least *talk* of building new school houses. I believe the law ought to require the superintendent to report to the town; and to make the hearing of his report a part of the regular business of the town meeting. This is not now the case, is it? The attendance of scholars is not so regular as it ought to be, nor so punctual; as the great number of "instances of tardiness," plainly show. This lack of punctuality and regularity of attendance is a great hindrance to the prosperity of our schools; and for this lack the parents and guardians are mainly responsible. This shows a want of proper interest in the schools on their part, as does the fact that so few of them ever visit their schools at all.

WM. T. HERRICK, Clarendon.

---

There is a manifest interest in the schools in this town, which is increasing from year to year, and this is evidently due to the influence of the Teachers' Institutes held among us: together with the requirements of the school law, the system of reports, registers, etc.

An incompetent teacher cannot long dupe the people in this vicinity, for they are awake to the subject of education, and scholars are questioned as to what they learn, and what advancement they are making,—*out of school*, as well as *in* it. I can cite many instances, where parents have made it a practice, to study, with their children the lessons, to be confident they are well learned and understood (so far as they can explain them,) before they leave for school; and it would not require ten minutes in the school room, to tell by the bright eyes, and good conduct of these scholars, who they were. My experience as a teacher has proved this to be true; where parents are interested, as they ought to be, and give what encouragement and assistance they can at home, their children are almost without exception orderly, and attentive scholars.

JOWN W. EDDY, Fair Haven.

---

As you solicit remarks I will state that I think one great failure of schools is the want of teachers who understand the business of governing and teaching; most of them fail for the want of system and order; there is a want of adapting the teaching to the capacities; some fail for the want of thoroughness in teaching; others will ask the questions and answer the greater part, which I think is an error in our schools. It is well understood that unless the child can be awakened to the importance of mental culture, something which causes him to understand, appreciate and love the studies which he pursues, little can be made, little real good can be accomplished while attending school. Washing slates, getting drink, wetting sponges, and constant calls on the teacher in school hours, can all be omitted without the least injury to the scholar, or detriment to the school. Regularity of recitation, system is the life of a school; let the classes have a fixed time for recitations, as this will be a powerful incentive to promptness which is wanting where there is no fixed period for recitations.

S. M. DIKEMAN. Hubbardton.

---

I think that our Teachers' Institutes and annual reports are having a very marked effect on our common schools, and if continued, I hope in time will lead parents to see the necessity of having good school houses and of visiting the schools to help along the teachers in the great work that is before them. The Teachers' Institutes are doing a good work for our teachers who, in too many cases, are young and inexperienced and need the counsel which they get at them. The work seems to have been begun in the right direction, yet it will need line upon line, precept upon precept, of stubborn facts to make parents see their duty, and

to bring teachers up to that standard which it is necessary they should be brought to, before our schools can be what they ought to be.

JEREMIAH THORNTON, Ira.

---

I think the Teachers' Institute is a great benefit to teachers and to all friends of education in this county who will avail themselves of it. I go in for all improvements in educating the rising generation of our country; and if all parents would be more interested for their children's welfare in educating our schools would soon rise out of this sleepy state which has come over them. I find some parents are getting wide awake on the subject of common schools in this State.

This town has employed female teachers for most of the time, summer and winter, for a number of years past. To hire females in winter to teach and manage large boys is a bad practice. Females ought never to take winter schools of this class.

I submit these few remarks to you for the benefit of all; and hope I shall be able to draw a better picture in the next remarks I may make.

I am in favor of the annual report, and I think it is a benefit to all that will read it. In all of them can be found the condition of the schools throughout the whole State.

IRA ORMSBY, Mendon.

---

In making my report, I can add but little under the head of remarks, or at least but little in addition to what I have sent you in former reports. The schools in Middletown have been slowly improving since we have had the benefit of the present law, and I have strong faith that we shall ere long have our schools in a condition that will be satisfactory to those of us who are charged with having "high notions" in regard to them. The difficulties in the way of progress are the opposition which we are obliged to encounter when improvements are attempted, and the want (not to say ignorance) of what is really needed to bring our scools up to where they might and should be. To say that our people are entirely regardless of their schools would be a slander upon them. for they pay their school taxes as cheerfully as they do any of their taxes. They would not do without schools any more than they would without bread in their families—but the lack is here; they do not seem to realize that their schools, with the proper attention and effort on their part, would be very much better. They seem to think that their part consists in simply hiring a teacher, putting him into the school, paying him when he is through, and that the benefits, that is, the proper education of their children, will follow as a matter of course. I find it hard work to get the people out of the old track. yet by perseverance they may be induced to adopt gradually one improvement after another. The work will have to be accomplished by the untiring and persistent efforts of the friends of education. The Superintendent, or any friend of education may suggest improvements but the people are slow to adopt them, and if they do not adopt them at once we should not be discouraged. We have got to arrive at the proper standard by inches, and so long as our course is onward we should be encouraged, though we move slowly. That we are moving, is certain, and this may be said of the schools of Vermont, very generally.

The advance in our large towns is very much indeed, and the smaller towns though more tardy, will come up in the end.

Our school Registers are kept better each year, which of itself is encouraging. The manner in which a Register is kept is a pretty sure indication of what the school is,—as much so as the business man's register, or his book of accounts; and for one, I would sooner abandon anything else in our present system, than our school Registers.

I think very much of Teachers' Institutes. We never fail in having good results from them, and I wish that all teachers could have the benefit of them, which is hardly possible, when but one in each County is holden during the year. Perhaps that is all the Secretary has time to attend to; but I have sometimes felt that they

do more towards preparing the public mind to appreciate the importance of attending to our educational interests than anything else. If I could have my way about it, I would have one or more Teachers' Institutes in each County twice a year, and have them continue from one to four weeks. Yet those we now have, or those we have had, have done much good; let us have those by all means if we can have no more.

The great thing to be accomplished in our educational reform, in my judgment, is to reform the public mind on that subject. The Secretary of the Board of Education, as well as many other gentlemen in Vermont, can give us a system which in itself would seem to be perfect, but they cannot make the people adopt it unless they choose to, and they will not choose to until they can be roused up and made to see and feel its importance. Let us have then our Teachers' Institutes, our State, County and Town educational societies, our lectures, our lyceums, conventions, or any and every means to awaken the public mind. When we can have a good school—one that will serve as a model—let us have that, and let the people see the difference between such a school and our ordinary second or third-rate schools. Let us do anything we can do to awaken an interest among the people on that subject; and when we have gained an inch of ground hold it, and prepare for a further advance.

B. FRISBIE, Middletown.

---

You invite expressions of opinion from Superintendents upon various topics, and among others, refer to school Registers. There are probably some localities where as a means of school improvement these are esteemed lightly, otherwise they would not have been likely to be alluded to. If there is an earnest, thorough teacher, who discredits them, or a working friend of public schools that would have them done away, I have not yet made his acquaintance. Of course there are those who think schools are not as good as they once were, and some, who seriously contend that it infringes upon Democracy for the State to direct in matters which they assume belong to Districts: such belong to a class usually quite as liberal with their breath as with their other gifts, and are never found in proximity to school houses. They would not be likely to resort to "coercion" if school Registers, school marms, and even the eloquent Secretary should "secede."

Reasons for keeping accounts and records in other departments, seem to me to apply as well to schools. Individuals are supposed to be the more successful as they have accurate and reliable knowledge of their business. And when community come to value money invested in public schools as they do that raised for other public purposes, the school Register will then become an object, as giving reward for efforts in causing greater attendance upon schools, in the shape of increased proportion of the public fund.

As it now is too generally, they are untiringly consistent in resisting any additional expenses as though money was a precious thing, and yet strange to say, they take little thought how it is being expended or how its amount may be increased without taxing them. I believe school Registers are a benefit to the teachers. Take over half of them (Registers) and it does not require much of a critic to see that there is a lack of order, taste, neatness, accuracy—in short, discipline in their keeping. And who shall tell how many a teacher who supposed he was considerable, has turned away from his botched and ill completed Register, about to pass from his eyes to the scrutiny of town dignitaries, with the firm resolve to fit himself for leaving a better looking record.

The teacher uses the Register to secure punctuality—to lessen the instances of dismissal before the close of school—to enforce upon the school remarks of visitors—to raise the standard of recitations as well as of deportment. I don't mean to say that the Register always helps to do this, or that it will aid every teacher in doing it. No one claims that the best sort of spectacles would be of decided benefit to a mole. No one supposes that every teacher who attends the County Institute goes home with his measure of good filled; yet I apprehend that it will be the

testimony of nearly or quite all connected with schools, that there is no one means for their improvement that has accomplished so much as these same Institutes.

The teacher who has had a surfeit of grumblings as to what ought to be done, and real good advice in books, until to him it has become cant, and has learned from lack of sympathy and encouragement to think less of the amount he may accomplish than of what he can get along with, goes to the Institute to be made to see himself as he is, to be in contact with living, burning thoughts and pictures which from his soul he knows to be true, and goes home feeling that he can and will do something. The experience of others differs from mine, if it does not bear witness to a marked difference in the appearance of schools before and after an Institute in the County.

CHARLES PARMENTER, Mt. Holly.

---

I think we have gratifying evidence of the general excellence and satisfactory working of our present school law. The schools in this town for the past year have generally been in a good degree prosperous, some of them superior. Increasing interest appears to be taken in them, as also in the proper carrying out of the provisions of the law.

I have always been most cordially in favor of the general system of supervision which the statute requires; and certainly no unimportant part of the results of this supervision is found in the facts and considerations spread before the citizens of the State in the annual report. Having for several years past had no official connection with the common schools, I am free to express my high appreciation of the importance of the work that has been done to the cause of common school education in the State, both by town Superintendents and the Board of Education. The annual Reports of the latter I regard as exceedingly valuable; certainly, generally, just such facts and suggestions as ought to be read and carefully pondered by every citizen; and I think the copious extracts from the reports of town Superindents, have added much to their interest and value. Among the special topics which here, at least, need to be kept before the people, is that of good school houses, and their surroundings and apparatus. In my report to the town meeting recently, I tried to stir up some pride or proper interest in this matter, and was afterwards happy to learn that there was hope of success in the efforts anticipated to build a new house to take the place not of one of the poorest, but of one that I had characterized as, "perhaps for the present sufferable."

I hope one other one at least will be built during the year in spite of the war. To encourage an immediate effort to supply the want of apparatus in the different districts, I promised in my report five dollars (one dollar each) to the first five districts which should raise by tax or otherwise a sum not less than ten dollars each, for this object. I mention it for the sake of noting the gratifying fact that already one district has reported a subscription of eleven dollars and a half, with the inquiry, "Are we too late?" A good beginning. And while I am speaking of school houses and their fixtures, I will quote a paragraph from my report to the town upon a point which I regard as of special importance, and which has, nevertheless, been almost entirely overlooked, so far as I have seen, both in *suggestions about* the proper construction of school houses, and the *actual* construction of them.

"In the construction of but few school houses in town, and I know not but in these it was accidental, has any reference been had to a fact very general if not universal in its tendency, and often very important in its results; it is this, viz: that aside from special efforts of teachers to prevent it, *the direction of the seats or desks* on which children get their first knowledge of geography, will do much towards giving them *correct* or *erroneous impressions* of the *direction from them*, and relative positions of various places on the earth. These seats should be made, even at the expense of much study and some additional labor, if necessary, *to face the North*, so that the actual direction and relative position of places in respect to the pupil, may be in *reality just what they appear* on the map spread out before him." If my views of this matter are correct, and they have often been confirmed

by the experience of those whose attention I have called to the subject, it should receive attention in the future building or remodeling of our school houses.

In regard to school Registers and Teachers' Institutes, I will only say now that your general ideas of what they ought to be and do, so far as I understand them, have my hearty concurrence. Go on improving, wherever that may be, by the aid of past experience and reflection; slacken no efforts in regard to either, and I doubt not the benefit will *sometime* be, at least, apparent to all.

AZARIAH HYDE, Pawlet.

---

I think the success of our schools has been very good this year, considering the apparent want of interest on the part of parents. I conclude they do not find time to visit the schools, though they have enough time for everything else, and they evidently think they have done all that is necessary when they have employed a person to occupy the school room six hours per day for three months. I think, however, that there is an increasing interest in this direction, and a greater effort is made to secure teachers who are experienced and well qualified for the business. I hope a greater interest will be manifested in visiting the schools, believing it would very much encourage both teacher and scholar.

The Registers have been generally well kept, and, in most cases, filled out in due form. In some districts I think the questions concerning the expense of the school are not quite correct. Wood and board being raised on the scholar involves some complexity, which was not properly arranged. But this ancient method of doing this business is rather losing favor, and more liberal views are entertained on the question of putting the entire expense of our common schools on the Grand List.

C. W. BINGHAM, Pittsfield.

---

The school Registers are becoming more valuable and reliable every year as the system of keeping them comes to be understood and its object appreciated. In fact there is no other method by which the statistics and every day records of our schools can be made known. The successful operation and development of our system of public instruction, demand that full and reliable returns be made annually to the Board of Education, that the executive officer of the Board, whose duty it is to carefully watch the working of the whole system, may have constantly full information as to its general progress and success. Perhaps the plan of the Registers now in use cannot be materially improved at present.

The Teachers' Institutes, which have been so successfully conducted for the past few years in our State, have exerted a vast influence upon the people of Vermont in waking them up from the stupor and lethargy in which they have so long remained, and they find out that we have a system of school education worthy of their attention, approbation and encouragement. The Institutes are giving us "*live*" teachers, and the evidences are visible in all our schools. The spirit that these gatherings are infusing into the minds of the masses of the people, will very soon raise the tone of public sentiment in regard to our common schools, and the faithful, earnest, accomplished teacher will be placed in the first rank of our public benefactors where he of right belongs. These agencies for the training of teachers are annually attracting more attention and winning a larger influence. A higer average in attendance upon these teacher's meetings than has ever been attained before, gives ample evidence of their popularity and usefulness. They annually furnish teachers who are unusually successful, and the new methods of instruction they have introduced have been received with general favor, and are thus lending their aid to hasten the time when the school room management and instruction throughout the State shall be uniform, systematic and efficient.

The Legislature should be petitioned at its next session for a more ample and liberal provision for the Teachers' Institutes, which are the fountain from whence our best instructors in teaching our schools must be drawn until we can have estab-

lished in our commonwealth what we so much need, a Normal school, sustained at the public expense.

HENRY CLARK, Poultney.

---

I would suggest that the district clerks in this town be cordially invited to attend the next annual County Institute, that they may be taught their duty in regard to the Registers. Not half of the Registers that have been returned at all have been sworn to, and many of the questions are not answered in any way, and more are in such a way as to be in no possible manner of any use in making a statistical report. The teachers need some "adjectives to be used to them." Many questions that require a definite number, are answered by the word, several. I think there is much that might be done in informing the district officers of the practical working of the school laws at the Institute, if they can be induced to attend. There is surely a great lack of *disposition*, or a manifest ignorance in what they officially have to do in educating children of our good old State.

You wish me to state what I think of the Teachers' Institutes. Does not the name itself convey the idea that these annual "love feasts" are more particularly designated for the teachers? The teachers return from these meetings with hearts *full* of love for children, a greatly increased devotion, and firmer resolves to spend their strength and talents in carrying out God's first mandate, viz., "Let there be light." If the fathers and mothers who send their children to the Vermont "school marms" could each and all read or hear read your annual Reports, especially the fifth, you would see a bursting forth of educational interest from the sleepy heads and throbless hearts of the inhabitants of these old green hills, that soon would result in that for which you so long and untiringly have labored and prayed in regard to the schools of Vermont.

I suggest that a plan be adopted to have such parts of the report read in each school district as in the opinion of the clerk or some other person, would arouse them to a cheerful discharge of their duties in keeping "the star that never sets," high in the zenith, its light steady, and to brightness undimmed.

B. F. BINGHAM, Rutland.

---

The standard of qualifications for teachers is not high, and in the attempt to elevate it the superintendent and others intrusted in the work of popular education have to contend with much ignorance, many prejudices, a miserly and mercenary spirit and a host of adverse influences. Yet there is an increasing degree of interest in our schools and a commendable readiness on the part of the majority of the people to remedy defects when pointed out to them. The tendency to employ those who will teach for low wages prevails to too great an extent. It is not comprehended that a school may derive much advantage from a teacher of superior qualifications. If they know a trifle more than the scholars under their charge, they are supposed to be competent instructors regardless of their experience or judgment. The large part of the districts are small, and small schools even with the best instructors, cannot be made so interesting and profitable as larger ones. And when, because they are small, they are assigned to the care of cheap teachers, they must be expected to be cheap schools in more respects than one.

H. P. OSGOOD, Shrewsbury.

---

I have been superintendent of schools in this town, excepting two years, for the past sixteen years, have had a good opportunity to watch the operations of our school law, and feel warranted in saying that there has been a growing interest in the common school. Our school law is not perfect, yet if well worked, the good resulting from it cannot be computed by dollars and cents. If we would progress in this good cause the whole people must take hold of it. The freemen of each district should meet together in school meeting and consult matters pertaining to the interest of the school. They should elect a man to the office of committee who feels

a desire to have a good school, one who will be willing to pay a good teacher for service rendered. And the members of the district should visit the school and encourage and sustain the teacher.

The office of superintendent must be filled by a person who is willing to labor for the good of the public without pay. For although he may receive the nominal sum of one dollar a day for certain service rendered, he is in duty bound to be the educational centre for the town. He must call the people together and hold educational meeting, he must address them himself if capable. He must attend Institutes, Teachers Associations, &c. He should also be a man who without fear or favor can stand before his fellow freemen and give an impartial account of each district, school and teacher. The Secretary of the Board of Education must act as the centre of education for the State, the sun in our educational system. I can judge something of his responsibilities, his labors and anxieties, but he must answer for himself whether he receives a full compensation in dollars and cents for his services. Without his service and his annual reports all other service would be of little account. Doubtless the annual report of the Secretary is not read by the people as it should be. In most cases it does not probably circulate beyond the family of the district clerk. Can there not be some way devised to extend its circulation? This alone would more than doubly compensate for the Secretary's salary. In my report to the town I urged upon them the importance of reading the reports and read the closing remarks to them myself. Teachers' Institutes have been the means of great good, and we must not do without them. The people are becoming more acquainted with the workings of the registers. The only true way to divide the public money is according to actual attendance, and that could not be ascertained without the registers,—and besides, the scholars' record operates favorably upon them, and parents for this reason are induced to visit the schools and record their names. So far as I have observed there are twice as many pages in them as are needed. Of course you will vary the questions as circumstances require. I would like to suggest the following questions to teachers: Have you read the last annual report? What educational journals do you pay for and read? To district clerks: How many families have read the report? How many educational journals are taken in the district?

It is necessary in these times to economize time and money; but I trust our wise legislators value our free schools to highly to take anything from the small sum appriated for the payment of the expenses of the Board and town superintendents, being less than three dollars for each school district.

J. NEWTON PERRIN, Berlin.

---

But for all this our schools are sadly deficient and wanting in many respects to make them what they should be. Some of the most essential parts are lacking to make the present school law (which is a great and holy law, although not yet perfect) operative, and that is, the schools in this town do not have the help, support and sympathy of the parents of the scholars. This has been manifest in many respects this winter, and was brought out in many discussions. One is they do not want any more schools than can be supported by the public money, or on the scholar. This idea is still advanced by a few old fogies. Another is, they must have the teacher that will keep for the least money, no matter what the moral character of the teacher may be, or his qualifications as a teacher. If you remonstrate against such a course, they will tell you that it costs but one dollar a week and board around at that. Another is, that the school houses, in the minds of the tax-payers are good enough, no matter how poor they may be. We have some in town not fit to be called school houses. They are a disgrace to the town, and much more to the district. Yet we have some nice, new school houses in town, some two or three built within the last two years, and some three or four districts are now agitating the question of building new houses. May they succeed! Another great hindrance to the advancement of our schools is, that committees and parents do not take general interest enough in them. These are among the many hinderances to the improvement of our schools in this town. The inhabitants of this town comparatively, have been

dead on the subject of schools, and the school law is now unappreciated by a large majority in town, and the people need something to stir them up to a sense of their duty.

We want superintendents who are willing to put their shoulders to the wheel of our new school law and help roll it out of the mud of ignorance and enter into the work of improving the schools where they are called to labor, with a determination to do some good for our schools; and that are willing to co-operate with the Secretary of the Board of Education, and lend a helping hand in the great work he is doing.

I know of no better way of getting the people interested in our schools, than by Teachers' Institutes, and meetings and discussions. I know this from the course I took last winter. I held teachers meetings in the different districts in town, discussing some questions of importance and interest connected with our schools. The people soon took an interest in them, and the teachers all acknowledge the benefit they had in their districts on the minds of the people. But to make these meetings profitable the teachers must be willing to do their part. In short, that teacher who is not willing to do all in his power for the advancement of his school, is not worthy to be called a teacher.

JOSEPH P. LAMSON, Cabot.

---

I have been connected with the schools of Calais for the last five years, and within that time there has been a gradual change for the better. District number five (the largest in town) for the past two years have had three terms each year, and, with such good success that other districts, at their last annual meeting, voted to try the same experiment.

The Teachers' Institute held here under your supervision last fall, created a marked enthusiasm among the *teachers* and our few friends of education. Nearly every teacher that taught in town this winter was at the Institute last fall, and it did them and their schools much good.

B. P. WHITE, Calais.

---

I think there is a decided improvement in keeping the school registers. The teachers in town for the past year have been mostly old and experienced teachers, and have understood and performed their part in the matter better than teachers have usually done before.

Our school houses with two or three exceptions are new and commodious, and are built with taste and convenience; but there has been no particular attention paid to play grounds, the public highway being all the one they have in most districts.

The Teachers' Institutes that have been held in the adjoining towns, have generally been pretty well represented from this town by the teachers and friends of education, and have exerted a good influence, and, in my opinion, are a great benefit to the educational interests of the State.

I regret to say that the people in this town although entirely willing to pay out their money freely to support schools, have failed almost entirely to visit the schools while in session, which, in my opinion is a great mistake, and which I hope in the future will be remedied.

GEORGE H. CRANDALL, Duxbury.

---

My opinion is that the present school system is well adapted to the wants of our people. We need a *system*. We *have* one and it can be amended from time to time as circumstances demand. There are some who think it involves needless expense, but they are men who were educated under the old fashioned regime, and can see no good in innovations of any kind; and then, this system has not had time to vindicate its superiority to those minds that are not convinced so long as there is a peg to fasten an objection upon. I hope we shall hold on to the present law till the generation being educated under it, shall come upon the stage of action. They can then elect whether to retain or reject it. I think that generation will thank the

present for its unwearied efforts in behalf of systematic education. The system works well in this town. Our schools have been successful the past year. No difficulty has arisen in any district. The teachers have labored faithfully. They have succeeded in awakening an excellent interest among the scholars. Several of the schools have ranked high, while all have been good, and none failures. We need more interest on the part of the prudential committees and parents. They should visit the schools oftener and thus manifest their personal interst in the right education of their children. Farmers will take a look at their horses, cattle and hogs several times a day to see how they are thriving. Why not manifest equal interest in the growth of the immortal minds committed to their care.

JOSHUA GILL, Moretown.

---

School Registers. A mighty lever, elevating slowly, silently, but surely the schools throughout the State. "God bless the man that first invented" them. These are exerting a wonderfully systematizing influence on the schools, and they furnish the data for new plans of improvement, and the most cogent arguments in the world for establishing these plans with the matter of fact loving people of Vermont.

Teachers' Institutes. Everything for them, nothing against them. They take the place of the Normal School, and furnish a school to inexperience, where concise, practical information is furnished (almost) gratuitously, to the value of which the increased and increasing intelligence and success of the teachers abundantly testify. It is to be hoped that our next Legislature will wipe the disgrace from the history of Vermont by appropriating, instead of *nothing*, *double* the former appropriation.

GEO. P. BEARD, Northfield.

---

The schools in this town are prospering finely under the present system; and as we become familiar with the application and enforcement of its many departments, we know better how to realize the benefits of a thorough organization of school law. Still, I think many of the Superintendents are deficient in the fulfilment of their obligations, especially in the examination of teachers. I am satisfied if they would do their duty, according to the requirements, without fear, affection, or favor of any one, there would be far many less unqualified teachers.

O. W. CREE, Plainfield.

---

We have had some very good schools during the year—teachers and scholars wakefully and earnestly doing their work, and the progress clear and marked. It has been a pleasure to visit them. The whole machinery has moved as if the work done was not a *task* but a *joy*. We have had a few that were worse than worthless—schools of confusion, impudence and ill-manners. The scholars were a law unto themselves, each doing what seemed agreeable in his own eyes. I am happy to say the number of such schools was very few."

The feeling very general last year was, that in these hard times cheap teachers must be employed. The result was that young misses, with little character and no experience, were put into the schools, while the best teachers were left unemployed. I trust the experience of last year's folly will have a salutary effect on the schools for the year to come. A beautiful school house has been erected at the Centre, at a cost of $1,000. Seldom is a pleasanter and better furnished school house found. Ten new school houses have been built in ten of the seventeen districts in town, within a little more than ten years.

I think very few would be willing to dispense with the school system, and the annual Reports of the Secretary. No other earthly interest is so vital as that of our common schools; no other should be watched and cherished with such intelligent and sleepless care. That this may be done, the facts must be had. They must be collected and kept constantly before the people. To do this, the Registers and the Reports are essential. We cannot dispense with them. Such a revolution as a return to the old order of things, I deem impossible. The law requiring Superinten-

dents to procure a certificate from a neighboring Superintendent before they can teach in their own town, seems to me a folly. The town that puts into that office a person unqualified or unfit to teach school, ought to be afflicted with his teaching, and that without remedy.

C. C. PARKER, Waterbury.

---

The condition and character of the schools in this town have not changed very materially this year over those of last year. Although I think that the schools of this town will compare quite favorably with those of other towns; nevertheless, they are far from being what they might be or should be. The standard to which schools ought to be brought up, has not been arrived at yet, and it never will until there is an increased interest manifested by parents and citizens generally. The lack of interest can be accounted for in no other way than that a majority of the people think that the time honored customs of their fathers and grandfathers are enough for the present enlightened and growing age of Young America. What an absurd idea. Education should not be made a secondary object, as it most generally is among the Yankees; for a government like the one we live in cannot be sustained unless the people are educated—educated to a sense of the duty which all have a part in performing.

Registers, when kept by teachers who perfectly understand them, are productive of much good, especially in districts where there is any interest at all, and they serve to enliven and stimulate to action those of a more backward character.

Teachers' Institutes come next to our notice. In my opinion there is nothing that tends so much to elevate the public mind as a series of Teachers' Institutes. It calls all classes together, and leads all who would otherwise never think of schools as concerning themselves, to discuss questions which are interesting to all. The annual Report reflects great credit on the Secretary for the many useful and interesting ideas and accounts of our schools which otherwise would never have been known to the public.

A. P. TOWN, Woodbury.

---

In my opinion we have too few wide-awake, living, rousing, instructive, and convincing teachers. They must be sincerely in earnest and make their scholars so. The permanent good which results from teaching, is in the amount of truth which the pupil is induced to apprehend and digest. Therefore teach us knowledge, but teach it with all the *fire* which art and faith can give.

O. C. MERRIFIELD, Brookline.

---

I feel myself in duty bound to offer my opinion respecting the public schools of our town. I am willing to do anything in my power to improve the condition of the schools of our State. They are the means and the only means for schooling presented to nearly one-half the children of Vermont; they annually cost the State (in time of peace) more than all other public expenditures combined, consequently are not to be considered a secondary matter, but an important primary object. The question proposed should be, how shall we improve them? In reply, allow me to say, first improve our teachers; employ talent and experience. Says one, how shall we get that? I answer, simply by paying for it. We should be willing to pay well, and at the same time very exacting in our demands for our money's worth. It should be a rule adopted to keep young, inexperienced, unqualified teachers out of our schools as much as possible, and, when we introduce a young teacher, be sure and have them thoroughly educated in book matters. The inhabitants of Guilford are not penurious in their school expenditures. They are willing to pay well for long terms. Their failing seems to be in not getting their money's worth. They do not visit their schools enough. They leave that task to be performed by the Superintendents. There is need of public lecturing by our Secretary, or some one else, on school matters, to awaken a more lively interest. We have made no improvements

in school apparatus, or in school houses during the last school year. Our school houses are passably good. We need additions of maps and globes in almost every district in town. But I suppose we must be content by saying, war expenses first, school matters next.

J. H. RICHMOND, Guilford.

---

The schools in this town for the past year have been generally successful. In some districts Prudential Committees have taken more pains than usual to secure the services of able, well qualified teachers, and parents have shown an increased interest in their scholars' progress. I consider these auspicious omens; for when parents realize the importance of giving their children good early training; when they determine that they will have none but the best teachers to teach them; when they visit them in school, and maintain a watchful supervision over the interests and general management of their schools, we may be sure that a reformatory movement originating from the right source has commenced. While these proofs of a forward movement are seen in some districts, a few still adhere tenaciously to the beaten track of "old Fogyism" made by their fathers, deeming all deviations from the ancient land marks dangerous innovations. These keep their old comfortless dilapidated school houses and continue to hire *cheap* teachers, and an occasional failure is the natural result. The Registers have been very well kept by most of the teachers but the returns of some of the district clerks are deficient in some respects. When properly kept, I consider Registers reliable sources of valuable statistical information; and this is just the kind of information we want. The people want the facts —the figures, and by an annual comparison of these they may discover the errors and deficiencies of our educational system, and having discovered obviate them. The Registers also exert a good influence in inducing a more regular attendance of scholars. I regard the annual Report of the Secretary as very important and essential as a means for the general dissemination of a knowledge of the condition of our common schools, it being an authentic, condensed statement of their welfare throughout the State. Teachers' Institutes have proved valuable auxiliaries in educational reform, in inciting teachers to more vigorous efforts and faithfulness in the discharge of their duties, and in awakening in the public mind a livelier interest in the cause of education.

E. L. WATERMAN, Jamaica.

---

The school house and its surroundings should not only be made comfortable and convenient, but pleasant and attractive. There is one thing I have observed, that many of our teachers are too theoretical. They know and can tell what the book says, and that is all. They cannot teach the sciences independent of the book. The mode of instruction is too mechanical. The teacher seems to think that if pupils can recite by rule and give the answer as found in the book, can perform a problem by the rule, this is sufficient, whether they can make an application of the rule to practical questions out of the book or not. But this is not enough. It is the teacher's duty to teach scholars to think for themselves, not only with the book but without it. Not mere theories, but a thorough knowledge of the principles, and an application should be taught.

WARREN GARFIELD, Londonderry.

---

Our schools can never realize the full fruits of their mission, until it is made a *sine qua non*, that every person designing to teach shall be first specially prepared for the work—shall first learn *how* to teach. There is no profession that more emphatically demands such special preparation than the profession of the teacher. I hope this demand will be met soon by the establishment in this State of a Normal School. If the friends of education can secure such an institution, they will have accomplished a great and good work. Much has been done for the cause of popu-

lar education in Vermont during the few years past, and much remains to be done. May the friends of education not tire until the work has been fully accomplished.

C. B. EDDY, Rockingham.

---

We have two hundred and thirty-six instances of tardiness less than last year. And we have fourteen scholars—be their names written in gold,—who have no absences, an improvement from last year. The "cloud" has at last become "as large as a man's hand," and there is hope in the future. Indeed had it not been so sickly here the number present every day would have been much larger. With an increased punctuality, there has been, as a matter of course, an increased disposition on the part of scholars to attend closely to their studies, and an increased courage has been infused into the hearts of teachers to do their duty faithfully. O! if parents could only realize the vast benefits that would accrue to teachers, their children and themselves from this one virtue, punctuality, they would see to it, that by all means, their children were in their seats at the appointed time with their books before them. They would then cease to hunt for excuses, as men hunt for hidden treasure, to keep their children at home.

J. B. GROUT, Stratton.

---

The schools of Townshend have been during the past year of a higher order than during previous years. We think a greater effort has been made to secure the services of experienced, competent teachers. So far as we can be heard in the matter, we mean always to press the claims of the best teachers, and, if possible, secure them for our schools. We go in for the best even if it costs the highest price. We have thought much of the very plain remarks of a very plain prudential committee man, who said he had rather pay two dollars for something, than one for nothing. The parents of this town sadly neglect their schools, giving them not near as much attention as they do their cattle and horses. We feel, however, that there is already much deeper interest than formerly, and so feel somewhat encouraged. We wish the Institute repeated among us as often as possible, for its effect is very decidedly beneficial in suggesting new methods of interesting and instructing children, in quickening thought, in forming an acquaintance between teachers, and in enlisting the sympathies of the public in the cause of common school education. We think the morals of our children are sadly neglected, first and chiefly at home, and then as a matter of course in our schools.

C. L. CUSHMAN, Townsend.

---

To the best success and improvement of our schools, I consider the registers and annual reports indispensable. I think that Teachers' Institutes are not only instrumental in awakening an inlerest in the schools of those places in which they are held, but are directly beneficial to the teachers who attend them.

E. O. LEE, Vernon.

---

I would suggest a few things that I consider necessary to a good school. The beginning of the work is at home. It is for parents to mould the character and habits of their children. *Obedience* is the first great lesson to be learned. If this is not learned in the first stages of education, it never will be; or if it be, it will be with great difficulty and labor and severe discipline. Children who are taught obedience at home, practice it very easily at school. And they should be sent to school with the understanding that they must be as obedient there as at home.

Teachers can do but little in governing a school, unless they have the co-operation of parents. Too many teachers are blamed for want of government, when the fault lies more with the parents, or those making the complaint.

Another thing is frequent visitations of the schools by the parents. Less than a dozen parents have visited the schools in town during the past year; while the record

would show a larger attendance of visitors, nine tenths of whom were young people, who went to visit the young teacher, rather than the school, the insertion of whose names I consider a violation of the directions on the subject.

One thing more is care in the selection of the prudential committee. They should be intelligent, and feel an interest in the education of children,—men who will not make dollars and cents the rule by which to select a teacher. A good school of six weeks is worth more than a poor one of sixty.

A few years ago I saw a note addressed to the teacher by the prudential committee in regard to his daughter Harriet. He spelled her name *Haret!* and signed his own thus:—yours *respectively!* Are such men suitable to select teachers?

I will add but one more suggestion. If the education of children be of so much importance, would not towns do well to make much larger appropriations to sustain their schools?

BENJAMIN OBER, Wardsboro.

---

Why does not the law require all the expenses of the schools to be raised on the Grand List? This is the only just way. It would save much trouble to districts, and oblige every person, young and old, to have an interest in our schools. One of the schools in this town was made almost useless, by the miserable habit of taxing the scholars for the wood and board. The expense of these items fell upon poor families, and they could not bear it, and the scholars were kept at home. Other families could send to an adjoining town and pay their tuition there cheaper than their wood and board tax in their own district. And then the constant strife to settle this question in the districts, is enough to condemn the law as it is, and make the State ashamed to keep open such a source of strife and bad feeling. If the law was as it should be, it would dispose of the habit of boarding round. The Bible forbids "going from house to house for a living." The State ought to see that the command is obeyed so far as school teachers are concerned.

A. STEVENS, Westminister.

---

Parents do not generally give that attention to their schools which the welfare and improvement of their children demand; yet they are ready to complain of their teachers and blame them if they do not make good progress in their studies, while these same teachers are doing all in their power to promote their improvement; and many times, these fault finding parents present the greatest obstacles they have to encounter. If parents would be co-workers with teachers, good results would undoubtedly follow; but when they do not work with, but against them, the consequences will be most pernicious. In such cases the teachers suffer, the parents suffer; but the comparatively innocent children suffer more than all the rest. Their time is wasted, their mental powers are abused, and their morals corrupted.

Some parents neglect to provide suitable books and other necessary articles for their children, they do not see that they are at school in season. The three thousand eight hundred and eighty-five tardy marks in our registers for the past year, show clearly that there is blame somewhere. I think it cannot rest upon the teachers. The fault may be with the children, but if the parents put it there or do not remove it when they find it there, the blame must rest on them, for they ought to consider themselves responsible for the appearance of their scholars at their school house at the proper time. Why should not parents be as anxious to keep teachers at work as they are their hired men, and be as ready and careful to see that they have the necessary materials to work upon, and that in due season?

AMHERST LAMB, Whitingham.

---

I consider our present school law economical, efficient and admirably adapted to the wants of Vermont.

We look upon the Institutes as an instrumentality of very great utility, and hope to be favored with another in this town before long. In point of practical utility,

I think they are as far superior to similar Institutes in other States, as they are less expensive. I have attended several in other States, and some of them very expensive, and I feel certain that the *one* which was holden here was worth a number of those in economy, simplicity, interest and usefulness; and I wish we could have one every year in our village.

O. S. MORRIS, Wilmington.

---

For the improvement of our schools we need to elevate the standard of the qualifications of teachers. It seems to be a too general impression that all a teacher needs is a passable knowledge of the common branches, and too many of the teachers seem to be satisfied with this standard. And why should they not be? It is all that is demanded of them; and if they are at the expense of better qualifying themselves for the work, and demand a corresponding increase of remuneration, they are set aside, and those employed who can and will work for less wages. Let public opinion demand better qualified teachers and we can have them. Every one who proposes to teach should avail himself of the advantage to be derived from a Teachers' Institute. In no way, probably, can a teacher derive more benefit to himself in a short time than by mingling here with those of like occupation, and by listening to the lectures and discussions. In addition to the actual information acquired, an enthusiasm is awakened which will make him a more earnest and energetic teacher. As yet our citizens manifest but little interest in visting schools. We have made an attempt the past year to have a public examination at or near the close of each term of school; but there have not been more than eight or ten present except in one school. We hope to see, and that soon, more interest manifested in the welfare of the rising generation.

STEPHEN HARRIS, Windham.

---

Within the two years that I have been connected with the schools of this town as superintendent I have witnessed with pleasure the gradual improvement of our schools, and an awakening of the public mind to their true and highest interests. Like other great improvements, it is slow, and, though much less than it should be, yet we "hope on" and "hope ever." Let people generally understand very well the machinery of the school law, and it has some earnest supporters; though a large portion are seemingly utterly ignornant of its practical benefits. They entirely discard the idea of a superintendent on the old worn out plea of *ancient days*, when "they didn't have such new fangled notions," and they sigh for "those good old days." A few districts are dilatory in filing their registers, quite a number have not properly filled them out, while some have not certified to the correctness of answers before a justice of the peace. I am of the opinion that it would be well to deprive such districts of their public money till they comply with the provisions of the law in regard to the registers. The trouble in filling them out properly is small when compared with the good that will result from it; and every true hearted teacher and parent ought to be ready to do all in their power to promote the cause of education, and so elevate the community.

The qualifications of teachers have been better the last year. Indeed, sir, I believe that we have had some teachers in our schools this year that would compare favorably with the best teachers in our State. They are devoted soul and body to their work. Many of them have attended the Teachers' Institutes holden by you, and they have seemed to breathe in the spirit of those meetings whose effect through *them* on their schools seems to me cannot be estimated in dollars and cents. If our state fails to sustain these Institutes she robs herself of one of her most effective means of sending life, enthusiam, and a true spirit of culture throughout our common schools. I am surprised to find history almost wholly neglected in our schools. It should be studied in every school and one of the first studies. If we would give the history of the United States, the geography and history of Vermont, and geology a prominent place among school studies, and if we would fully sustain our present school law, including Teachers' Institutes, we might see the schools

of this State becoming the beacon lights for other States—"a city set upon a hill whose light cannot be hid."

There has been but every little improvement in school houses this year. They are many of them poor and unfit for their use. Let us make our school houses what they ought to be; then, and not till then shall we see the noble sons of New England becoming what we wish them to be.

N. L. BOYDEN, Barnard.

---

It was much to be feared that the great effort necessarily put forth by the United States to subdue the rebellion would tend to diminish the interest of the people in our common schools. But such, I think has not been the case, but rather the contrary. It is true that, as the demand for the sinews of war has increased, a corresponding difficulty in obtaining experienced teachers, has been felt, and it has been necessary to supply the places of those who have left teaching to practice the arts of war, with a younger class of teachers.

The schools, on the whole, for the past year, have been conducted with more than a middling share of talent and success. Many of the younger teachers in town have manifested an earnestness and zeal in their calling which give great promise of usefulness in the future should they be spared to work in the field they have with so much good taste chosen, and the duties of which they have with so much judgment performed. I have been strongly impressed with the importance of the public examinations. Let the *people* but manifest a little more sympathy with the superintendent in the performance of the duty imposed on him: a little more anxiety to know for themselves whether those whom they have engaged to stand as candidates for one of the most important places within the gift of any people, are possessed of that ready fund of knowledge, that quickness of perception which will enable him or her to see the wants of the pupil and supply it in such a way as will both interest and instruct the pupil, and much good will be the result, much of the load will be taken from the mind of the superintendent.

JOSEPH E. WILLIS, Bridgewater.

---

Our winter schools have been much broken up by sickness. Scarlet fever has prevailed in a very malignant form, in several districts, many children have died, and others were absent. The most shameful thing of all is, the number of tardy marks; these are more in the village districts than elsewhere; also the absences.

Most of the school houses are wretched hovels, utterly unfit for the purpose.

A school of higher grade is much needed here. Its effect would soon be seen in the better qualified teachers who would come from it. It would induce many of the older scholars to seek a better education.

The district clerks do their work badly; their returns are often careless and imperfect. Some of them regard it as of little consequence; others are scarcely qualified to do it. The want of compensation is the cause of their neglect. All the districts have kept Registers. All but one have been before me, with the clerk's oath that the answers made by him are correct, but some of them must have answered ignorantly or sworn falsely.

The effect of your Institutes upon teachers has been *good*. More ought to attend them. The reading of the annual Report would benefit teachers and enlighten citizens. It is a valuable document.

AUSTIN HAZEN, Norwich.

---

Our schools have made progress, but not great. There is a growing appreciation of the school law; a wish to have the teachers examined, the schools superintended, and the statistics all properly reported. The clerks generally try to do their duty. The great lack is *good teachers*, and yet the teaching is better than the pay. The thing is too short at both ends; we want good teachers to command higher wages;

and we want the higher wages to bring the teachers. The difficulty can only be removed gradually. We need Normal schools, and yet we cannot even have Institutes, we are so penny wise. But we must do something. I wish the town could have at least one model school, which the other teachers could visit. Our teachers know *books* better than they do *teaching* and *conducting*. Could they *see* a right school one day, it would be worth more than any number of lectures. Vermont is full of fair scholars, whose ideas of a school would be immensely improved by occasionally witnessing the practical working of the best methods of instruction and management. I have often been distressed with the hum-drum lifeless routine of many a capable teacher, whose notions of teaching would be raised one hundred per cent. by seeing for one day a model school.

Parental visitation better enables the parents to co-operate with teachers so as to sustain them in government and in thorough instruction. Parents are sometimes misled by disaffected scholars, and side against teachers, when they would by no means do it if they fully understood the case. Parents who never look in upon a school, and in their hurry and cares, never reflect much about it, cannot appreciate the importance of many little things in the practical working of a school, as they would really do if they went to see for themselves. Hence outsiders are liable to pronounce some school rule trivial, as a man, ignorant of a watch and looking at one of the smallest wheels apart from the rest might say that so insignificant a thing must be useless, when it is just the thing needed to make the whole machinery work admirably. The fact is a school is made up of a great many little things, and when they are well chosen, and skillfully systematized, and put into thorough operation, they make a beautiful school.

Whispering, lounging, careless noises, grotesque attitudes, heavy stepping, slamming of doors, helter skelter movements to and fro of classes, &c., are little things; so too are the particular methods of conducting a reading or a spelling exercise, little things; but in a school where all these little things are wisely attended to, and set right, the most indifferent beholder must be charmed. What exhibition of skill and art surpasses the work of such a teacher? He does it easily, quietly, but effectually. The very atmosphere where he presides is full of the right spirit—the spirit of stillness, and order and study. The scholars insensibly catch the amenities and proprieties of the place, boisterousness is hushed, roughness is polished; their manners are better in the street, and better at home, they are benefited for life. The whole scholar is moulded and improved, and that too for his whole future; he is inspired with intelligence and manliness.

The greatest lack in our schools is *government*. The teachers are usually better skilled in books than in generalship. This is not to be wondered at; good government is the problem of the world. It is the great want in nations; it is the great strife in politics. How many parents can do everything for their children but govern them. The complexion of a school is usually a fair index of the families represented in it. A teacher of real skill will change the appearance of a disorderly school marvelously soon. It is done easily in most cases, not by a beating process, but by power of mind, a power to govern. In one short week order will displace confusion; stillness, noise; diligence, idleness; a new atmosphere will fill the place, a new genius will preside there, and one good school is worth forty poor ones.

The punctuality and regularity of attendance has improved in some of our schools; while in others there has been no such gain, although special attention has been called to it. The loss to individual scholars, and to whole schools from this source is not considered. In some schools there is a dead loss of about one-third of the time from tardiness and absence. I say a dead loss, for the school costs just as much as if the whole time were saved to the scholars. I know it is often said of such losses that "they do not amount to much." But if your hired man had been often very tardy and frequently absent, and should say, when you came to settle with him, that "it did not amount to much and ought not to make any difference," you would be of another opinion, and very justly. Parents should see that their children go to school in season, and are never absent if it can be avoided. Teachers can do something to remedy this evil, a wide-awake teacher will.

Most of the scholars get all their education in the common school, and it should not be diminished; it should be as thorough and complete as practicable, for this education of the common people is our glory. There is no people under the sun whose masses are as intelligent, active minded and capable as are they where the common school system of the North prevails. The ridiculous talk of the South about arraying gentlemen against mudsills, loses much of its romance, and the tables are reversed, when the fact is known that a large proportion of the Confederate army enroll themselves by making their *marks;* while probably not a live Yankee has been found, of military age, unable to write his name and read the news, if he could not even make a steam engine, and print a paper.

CYRUS B. DRAKE, Royalton.

---

Our schools are not what they ought and might be if a more lively interest were taken in their welfare. They are now laboring under several disadvantages. In the first place some districts are not particular enough in the selection of their officers. The Prudential Committee are not always what they should be, having an earnest desire to promote the cause of education. They do not feel the importance as they should, of selecting teachers of the right stamp, those who are every way qualified for this responsible work. Neither do they manifest that deep and vital interest in the prosperity of the schools which the good of the rising generation demands. This you will learn to be true by examining the number of such persons who have been in to see the teachers and visit the different schools the past year. One only of this number in Sharon, according to the statistical reports, has graced the school room with his presence. The rest have all stayed away. Now would they hire persons to labor for them in any employment, except in instructing their children in the rudiments of knowledge, and never go to inspect their work, or aid and encourage them in it? Few farmers would treat their hired man in this way. He would want his eye upon him, and his work inspected. But in the business of School Committee, they think their duty done, and their responsibility ended when they have hired and paid the teacher. Again; the want of punctuality in the scholars, in not getting to school in season, is a fault which both teachers and parents should strive to correct. The tardiness of the pupils found in the Registers, and noted in the Reports, is a serious drawback to the prosperity of our schools. Too many in our schools are marked with the cross for lateness. This evil ought to be rectified. A child by being one hour late every day loses a whole day in six days, which makes a fortnight of schooling in three months. Let parents be more punctual in having their children attend school in proper season.

PHILETUS CLARK, Sharon.

---

The Teachers' Institutes under your superintendence have been productive of highly beneficial results. They have exerted a healthful influence upon teachers and schools. They have originated many essential reforms in the school, both with regard to government and instruction. The young teachers will receive great benefit from the views and suggestions of those of ripe experience. The Institutes will continue, I trust, to exert their influence in promoting, as they have done, the interests of education in the State.

P. HASKELL, Weathersfield.

---

The attention of the people of this town is being drawn towards popular education. This fact is discovered in various ways. They visit their schools more than formerly; they are more particular as to the appearance and comfort and convenience of their school houses than formerly, and to sum up, they are tending in the right direction.

P. H. HUTCHINSON, Weston.

Teachers' Institutes are of great profit, but are so "few and far between" that many of the teachers never attend one. A more liberal expenditure in this direction would doubtless be a good investment for our State.

There can be but one opinion as to the effect of annual Reports. No thoughtful man can be ignorant of the fact that these have already done much to awaken the public mind, and to spread abroad a knowledge of the wants and possibilities of the schools.

MOSES MARSTON, Woodstock.

---

Such is the tenor of the reports upon the condition of the schools for the past year, made in response to a request from me inserted in the statistical schedule forwarded, pursuant to law, to each Town Superintendent. I should have been glad to quote still more largely from these valuable reports, did the necessary limits of the Annual Report permit me to do so. And as all cannot be presented here, I have aimed to so select from all as to give the impressions of the local officials from every part of each County in the State, that no large section of the State should be unrepresented, and that as general a knowledge of the condition of the schools in every part of the State, as is practicable, should be obtained.

It is not supposed that these reports are all of equal value in all respects; but all are really valuable as giving the most authentic sources of correct information in each particular locality. The state of public appreciation of the importance of the schools differs very much in the different communities, for while in some sections all facilities for thorough popular instruction are deemed to be of paramount importance, and the supervision of the schools is considered a sacred trust to be given only to the best men in the community; in others the schools are looked upon as a burden; and any formal discharge of duties connected with them which will satisfy the literal requirements of the law, is satisfactory to all; and the office of superintendent is given readily to any who will take it, with little reference to competency or general character and standing. The power and value of local supervision must, on this account, vary much in different sections. But after making all the allowances thus required, it is hardly possible to over-state the value of the local reports. Among the town superintendents of schools, are always to be found many of the ablest and truest men in the State. There are many who, perfectly aware of the little estimation in which the office is often held, accept this onerous and thankless trust from the highest and purest motives, and in this quiet and ill-appreciated vocation do valuable and noble service to the State. And I desire again to state, as I have often stated before, that I know no class of men in Vermont who from pure and elevated motives, do so much and so good service to the State for so insignificant a compensation, as the town superintendents of schools. And in making their reports to me, they act entirely without concert and simply give their own impressions in reference to the condition and character and wants of the schools

in each one of the different localities. Hence whenever the great body of the superintendents concur in any general conclusion or in any reply to a particular question, the utmost reliance may well be placed upon their statements.

The very great unanimity with which, as is apparent from their reports, they speak of the constant change of teachers, the practice of boarding around, the support of schools by a tax upon the Grand List, the importance of good school houses, the effects of the new school law, the efficacy of the registers and the usefulness of the Institutes, gives weight to their conclusions.

## TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

In saying something in a general way about the series of fourteen Institutes, held in the various Counties during the year, it may be well to ask the attention of the Board to the expressions of opinion concerning them to be found in the reports of superintendents. In the statistical schedules I requested the superintendents to speak particularly of the Registers, the Institutes, and the Annual Reports, in order to obtain a knowledge of the general appreciation in the various portions of the State of these three prominent agencies of the Board in the accomplishment of the work given them to do.

It will be noticed in the reports, that there is an almost entire concurrence in considering the Teachers' Institutes, as they have been conducted, as an active, efficient and valuable agency in the improvement of the schools. Some express this opinion from personal knowlege obtained by attendance upon the Institutes; and many more from observing the actual effects of these gatherings in modifying and improving the methods of instruction and discipline in the schools. So much direct testimony, so uniform in its tenor and coming from so many different and widely separated sources, would appear to be worthy of candid consideration.

The Institutes, as a whole, have been as fully attended as ever before; for, while from peculiar circumstances, the attendance in two or three Counties was not as large as usual, in the remainder of the Counties it was much larger. And the attendance has been diminished also by the absorption of a large proportion of the male teachers into the ranks of the national army, for no class of men have been more largely represented in the army than the teachers of our schools. So far as I can judge from personal observation, the general interest in the Institutes has increased rather than diminished; and in every instance without exception the members of the Institutes have been cordially and hospitably received and entertained by the citizens.

The Institutes in our State have been compelled, as was reasonably to be expected, to assume a peculiar character, in order to adapt themselves to the somewhat peculiar educational wants of the State, and to keep within the limit of pecuniary expenditure prescribed

by the law. The law organizing the Board of Education required the Secretary to hold at least one Institute in each County annually, and made a certain appropriation therefor, and that appropriation was the smallest that had ever been made for such a purpose in New England and probably in the United States. It was a matter of no little difficulty to map out a plan or scheme for the Institutes that were to be held under the law. It was apparent in the first place that the same men who assist as instructors in the Institutes of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, &c., &c., could not be employed; for the reason that many of these men habitually received for their individual services in giving two, three, or four lectures at a single Institute in Massachusetts more than twice the amount appropriated in Vermont for a whole Institute. A single Institute in Massachusetts remaining in session five days, costs that State more than fourteen Institutes remaining in session in all nearly seven weeks, cost the State of Vermont under recent law, i. e. previous to the cutting off of all appropriation whatever, by act of the last Legislature.

It was manifest then from utter inability to secure the services of Instructors from abroad, that the work here must be done by home laborers. And the duration of the sessions of the Institutes was limited by the same inexorable cause. The sessions were therefore, as a matter of necessity limited to two days, and the Secretary and local teachers relied on mainly for instruction; and in planning the character of the Institutes, so far there was no great opportunity for choice, necessity controlled.

Some of the circumstances surrounding and seriously affecting the schools were peculiar. Vermont in 1846 had a fully organized State school system in active and general operation. The State superintendent, with the county and town superintendents formed a very efficient and valuable corps of supervision, acting in concert under the direction of the State superintendent; the Teachers' Institutes for each of which an appropriation of not exceeding $100, was made, did much to arouse the people; general public meetings fastened and made practical the aroused public sentiment, and a very decided and progressive improvement of schools, and of school houses began to be felt. But soon a change took place. The Legislature allowed the office of State superintendent to remain unfilled for years, and the long continuance of the vacancy evinced an acquiescence therein on the part of the people; the office of county superintendents was abolished; the topic of schools ceased by discussion to stir the public mind; the people began to look upon the subject of education with comparative indifference; its introduction to the attention of the Legislature was barely tolerated; the local supervision became merely formal and therefore useless; from the disinclination of the people generally to accept an *office* in the district, to the disinclination of eminent and prominent legislators to act upon the educational

committees in either legislative house, all betokened a belittling of the general subject in the public mind.

It was in and after such a state of things that in 1856–7—the Secretary was called upon, with less pecuniary means than was ever before allowed anywhere, to give such shape, character and direction to the newly prescribed Teachers' Institutes as should best subserve the educational interests of the State.

The State had two academic colleges with one of a military character, between seventy and eighty academies, many hundreds of select and private schools of every conceivable degree and grade, and the sympathies and interests of the friends of education were concentrated upon the various grades of higher institutions, while the three thousand common schools were left to a great extent unnoticed, uncared for and almost unknown except as provocatives of taxation.

The contrast between Vermont and Massachusetts at this time in all that appertained to education was particularly marked. In Massachusetts all of its higher institutions of learning were in a prosperous pecuniary situation; the constant recipients of generous individual benefactions and of legislative munificence. They occupied the front place in the public attention and proudly marched with strong and assured step in the very van of social advancement and State improvement. In Vermont its three excellent but weak and neglected collegiate institutions barely subsisted, struggling along through the very valley of the shadow of death, and while the peers of the best and most favored institutions in many other States, for excellent management and for substantial fruits; they only sustained the appearance of life through the stinted bounty picked up here and there from individual generosity, not so much the evidence even then of magnanimous devotion to the interests of sound learning, as the result of the persistence of a sort of pious mendicancy, whose very weakness and extremity was its only element of strength.

In Massachusetts, education took precedence of every other topic in the agitation of the public mind. Education, as at once the holiest object and the highest glory of a republican commonwealth, commanded everywhere the ready services of her best and truest men. At the corners of the streets, in the public assemblies, and in the legislative halls of that noble old state, her noblest citizens, ablest in intellectual strength and highest in social and political position, were always ready to defend and uphold the interests of popular education. Hostility to the schools has for a century been certain political death to any ambitious seeker for popular preferment, while the earliest as well as the brightest laurels that crown her Everetts, her Websters, her Sumner, her Wilson, her Rantoul, her Mann and her Banks, were won in contest with bigotry and prejudice in behalf of the promotion of education.

In Vermont for years the subject of education had been considered as common place and tiresome. The refusal of the Legislature to fill the office of State superintendent had denied all authentic and official expression to the State school system; no accurate and reliable knowlege of the condition of the schools had been procured for years; educational agitation had ceased; and no young and ambitious man in the State Legislature was willing to jeopardize his political prospects by connecting his name with the advocacy of so unpopular a matter, and for a long time education would have been comparatively voiceless in the State House, except for the attention given to it by its few determined and faithful friends who were mainly clergymen of different denominations.

In Massachusetts for many years no topic had been more frequently presented to the general attention of the people, and none more ably, than that of the common schools. The Institutes, the Teachers' Associations, the general meetings held under the direction of the Board of Education, and the educational meetings held in the State House under the control of the Legislature, had effectually aroused the minds of all; and the succession for twenty five years of a series of annual reports containing full and reliable statistical information, had stirred and awakened every thoughtful and intelligent man, until an ardent interest in the schools had become almost a necessary qualification of citizenship; and each individual with pride claimed the public schools of the State as the proudest monument of the worth and faithfulness of the good old commonwealth.

In Vermont all discussion of educational topics at the instance of the general law had died out; for years no statistics of the schools had been disseminated or even gathered; there were and had been for several years no Institutes, no general meetings and no report by direction of law, and except in a thanksgiving sermon, a fast-day prayer or a fourth of July oration, the subject of education was rarely mentioned.

Such is the painful but truthful picture of the diverse condition of the public sentiment in these two States. As a necessary consequence, in the one State, private and select schools and academies were by the steady improvement and enlargement of the scope of the common and graded schools, gradually becoming extinct, while the sufficiency of the common and higher public schools for the education of the children of the State was becoming daily more apparent; until the reply of one of her most distinguished citizens to an expression of astonish- that *his* children should attend the public schools in Boston, that "the "public schools were the best schools in Boston" tersely but fully characterized the school policy of the State.

In the other, the apathy and indifference of the whole people had resulted in the incorporation of a number of academies, sufficient as far as the number alone is concerned, to supply the wants of two States; and in the establishment in every section of private and select

schools without number, all of which were alienating the interests and affections of the whole people from the common schools, till, as a necessary and legitimate consequence the common schools, affectd by the disrespect and neglect of the different communities, deteriorated in character, and diminished in power, till to the earlier efforts made for the improvement of the schools, under the direction of your Hon. Board, the reply was often and actually made by men of culture and character who had not attended a school meeting or sent a child to a common school for years, that "the character of the common schools was so low "that they could not consent to expose the children that they loved to "their pernicious influences;" while a calm and placid unconsciousness seemed to extend itself over their faces, as though they were entirely unaware of having omitted any duty in the premises.

In such a condition of the schools and of public sentiment in regard to them, it seemed plain that in selecting and directing the various agencies to be put into active operation under your direction, the thorough and complete agitation and information of the public mind in reference to the magnitude and importance of the interests involved; and a full and complete exposition of the wants, deficiencies, general condition and capacities of the established system of schools, should be the first, and beyond comparison, the permanent object of the Board and its agents; and that to the accomplishment of this object, each and all of the various agencies should be directed.

It was and is plain that while the school will proverbially be as the teachers are, the teachers will be in character, attainments, and in power, as the wishes and desires of the people shall direct and determine. Consequently it was plain that the fathers and mothers and tax paying citizens of the State must be incited to demand better schools and abler teachers as the first step towards securing them. Hence in the effort to give to the Institutes that were about to be held, the necessary adaptation to the relief of the educational necessities of the State, it was indispensable so to shape them as to make the Institutes for all the people, as well as for the teachers. They should be so shaped and so managed that while they might do as much as possible in directing the aspirations, strengthening the determination and adding to the power of the teachers; they would also do something to awake and secure the sympathies and interests of the whole people, and thus while on the one hand they might improve the qualifications of the teachers, they might on the other increase the appreciation of and the demand for better schools, and thus that all parts of the great work might move on together.

In this necessity for the assumption by the Institutes of a sort of missionary character, was a convincing reason why the main work of the Institute must of necessity be performed mostly by the Secretary as the executive agent of the Board, who must be supposed to be fully cognizant of the plans and purposes of the Board, and who could best so guide them in all respects as to make them in their efforts

fully co-operate with all the other agencies in accomplishing the general result aimed at by the Board. No effort, therefore, was made to secure the services of teachers from without the State as instructors in the Institutes; first, because the law gave no means to do so had that course seemed desirable; and second, because in the existing condition of the schools and of public sentiment regarding them, it was thought that the most important work of the Institutes could be performed more earnestly and faithfully and with less probability of giving offense, by the authorized agents of the Board, than it could possibly be done by strangers, whose efforts however able and sincere, would still be liable to misinterpretation. This was the course first taken by the Secretary, and from time to time, whenever members of the Board have been present at the Institutes, they have without exception recommended that in this particular no change be made.

Having thus endeavored to account for the peculiar character that was given to the Institutes, I feel constrained to say once more, as I have often before stated in my previous Reports, that so far as I can judge from personal knowledge, and from reliable information, the Institutes have been most valuable and efficient auxiliaries in effecting all the changes that have been made in the character of our schools. The sessions have been so short that teachers have been willing to come, committees of enlightened districts have generally favored their attendance, and the citizens of the localities have felt the presence of the members as guests for two days only, as a light burden and oftentimes as no burden at all. Received with cordial hospitality and scattered through the various households, the teachers by conversing upon the Institutes, its objects, its lessons, and discussing the various propositions presented, and by talking about schools, and school privileges, have often largely increased the general interest in the subject, and have caused the attendance of many citizens who have often found the subjects discussed to be more full of practical interest than they had anticipated, and thus indirectly as well as directly, much good has been done.

And beside this, the Institute in its session of two days, working under no fixed programme, but adapting itself to the educational wants of each section by varying its topics, gives also opportunity for more full discussion of many matters that could hardly be touched upon in the general evening meetings held under the law. Held as they often have been, in the smaller and less accessible towns, they have gathered around them many minds to whom the subjects had never been presented orally, and thus have won the sympathies of hundreds that otherwise would have been rather indifferent. The discussion at the Institutes, of the recent school law, for instance, has produced a very marked effect in quieting the agitation that previously existed and substituting therefor a prevalent satisfaction. Wherever in other States they have been inaugurated, they have,

with the exception of New Hampshire, been persisted in, and have received the commendation of every State official to whom the care of the schools has been intrusted.

Hon. Henry Barnard, who has acted as Superintendent of Instruction in several different States, and upon whose character for sound common sense and good judgment no comment is necessary, says :

"By the designation, a Teacher's Institute, is now understood a "gathering of Teachers, old and young, experienced and inexpe- "rienced, of both sexes, and of schools of different grades ; in such "number as will develop the sympathies and power of a common "pursuit, and yet not so large as to exclude the freedom of individual "action ;—for a period of time long enough to admit of a systematic "plan of operations, and yet not so protracted as to prove a burden- "some expense, or an interruption to other engagements ;—under "the direction of men, whose only claim to respect and continued "attention must be their experience and acknowledged success in "the subjects assigned them ;—and in a course of instruction, at "once theoretical and practical, combined with opportunities of in- "quiry, discussion and familiar conversation.

"The Teachers' Institute so appointed, organized and conducted, "as to exclude professional jealousy, and at the same time enlist the "co-operation and attendance of school officers and parents, and by "the almost universal practice of welcoming Teachers to the hospi- "talities of the place where the Institute is held, and assigning to "the evening lectures and discussions all topics of general interest, "has proved an educational revival agency of the most extensive, "permanent and unobjectionable character.

"During nearly a quarter of a century's study and observation of "schools, school systems, and educational agencies, in different States "and countries, I have tried, seen or read of nothing so universally "applicable or so officient in awakening and directing rightly both "professional and parental interest in the broad field of popular edu- "cation, as a well attended and wisely conducted Teachers' Institute. "A single educational lecture or address, or a convention in which "a number of addresses are delivered, may occasionally move a "sluggish community into sudden and vigorous action, but gener- "ally it is only after years of effort, by a few individuals, against all "sorts of obstacles, that a good school house is built, a proper clas- "sification of studies secured, and well qualified teachers employed "and adequately paid, in schools of different grades. But I cannot "recall a town where I ever held a well conducted Institute, where "the teachers were distributed through all the principal families, and "the evenings were devoted to public addresses and discussions on "topics connected with the organization and administration of the "school system, and the classification, instruction, and discipline of "public schools, where the work of educational improvement did not "at once begin, and begin too where all improvement in the educa-

"tion of children must begin, in the heads and hearts of parents, in "the enthusiasm, enlarged knowledge and practical skill of teachers, "and in the well considered and liberal action of school officers and "the public generally.

"Permanent associations of teachers, for mutual improvement and "advancement of their profession, have accomplished much good, "and may be made still more widely beneficial, and should receive "the aid and countenance, not only of teachers but of the legisla- "ture and the people. But a well arranged and judiciously conduc- "ted series of Institutes, will, in a single year, without wasting "time in forming and amending constitutions, or election of officers, "and discussing questions of order, or places of meeting, and avoid- "ing all occasions of jealousy on charges of exclusiveness, reach a "larger number of teachers, secure a more thorough and systematic "presentation and discussion of the principles and method of teach- "ing and discipline, exposing and exploding those which are obsolete "and defective, and explaining and commending those which are "new and valuable, awaken more professional spirit, and form and "strengthen more bonds of connection between the older and young- "er teachers, than all the State, County and Town associations, act- "ing together, with meetings extending over only one or two days, "can do in many years.

"A well equipped Normal School, or Institution for the special "training of teachers, modified to suit the peculiar circumstances of "the State, and the present condition of the schools, is unquestion- "ably the most direct and efficient instrumentality for thoroughly "educating and training young men, and young women, for the work "of teaching; and if in its practical operations, the staff of profes- "sors could be so numerous, and of the peculiar qualifications re- "quired, as to conduct the County Institute, examine in connection "with a County school officer, all candidates for teaching, and with "your Board, all Normal classes participating in the funds which "you administer—such a Normal school, organized in connection "with other parts of the school system, and other agencies for the "professional improvement of teachers; would be an unmixed bless- "ing to the State, and improve at once, and largely, both the quali- "ty and quantity of instruction given in the public schools.

"But in the present state of popular feeling, and wide spread "financial embarrassment, such a Normal school cannot be looked "for; and even if it could be established at once, the Teachers' "Institute, under your general direction, and the educational lec- "ture, in connection with the operations of the Superintendent of "public instruction, can do more to create a demand for, and appre- "ciation of the services of well qualified teachers, and at the same "time, in connection with the State University, the Colleges, Acade- "mies and High Schools, contribute more largely to the better quali- "fication of such teachers as the districts will employ for the present

"to teach their schools, than even such an institution, unless under "the favorable conditions above supposed. The men employed to "conduct Institutes and examine Normal classes, must be men of "Normal training and capable of giving Normal Instruction; and if "such men can be employed, they will constitute, if not a Normal "school, an itinerating Normal agency, which will, every year, be "felt directly in every county, and indirectly through the teachers, "on a majority of the public schools and children of the State."

Horace Mann, when Secretary of the Massachusetts Board, introduced the system of Teachers' Institutes into Massachusetts from New York, and throughout his life was unceasing in commending them as an agency of great value.

Mr. Sears, who succeeded Mr. Mann, speaks in all of his official reports in praise of the Institutes. Mr. Boutwell concurs in the statements of his predecessors, and alluding to the Institutes as agencies acting upon the general mind says: "The Institute is not "only a valuable help to teachers, whether experienced or inexperi-"enced, but it has become a most important means of influencing the "public at large." And again he says: "The institute is a power-"ful agency in the right direction, and within the sphere of its influ-"ence is far superior to any that has been employed or suggested."

In his last annual Report, Mr. Rice, Superintendent of New York, says: "No other provision for the instruction of common school "teachers has been more successful than these modern organizations; "and it is gratifying to be able to report that the importance of their "agency in the successful operation of our school system within the "past few years is universally acknowledged and appreciated. These "Institutes are devoted to practical instruction in the most approved "methods of imparting knowledge to the young, and of disciplining "and awakening their faculties. This method of providing the com-"mon schools with teachers, whatever its imperfections, has the ad-"vantage that it affords instruction to persons who give earnest of "their interest in the vocation, and who immediately carry back into "the schools whatever increase of information and ability they may "have derived from the Institute."

Remarks similar to these might be quoted to almost any extent, were it necessary or desirable. No other single educational agency has been so often and so stongly commended.

And however useful and effective they may have proved themselves to be elsewhere, they have been still more useful here. In the absolute tranquillity of the public mind which of course resulted from an entire dearth of educational discussion, the first and greatest need of Vermont, was a vitalizing agency which would be able to revive, and indeed almost to create a wide-awake public opinion, which should examine faithfully into the real condition of the schools, as appreciating their importance and the incomparable magnitude of the interests intrusted to them, and then imperatively demand those

improved facilities in the way of school houses and equipments, those increased qualifications on the part of teachers, and that higher estimation of the desirability of mental and moral culture, which are the indispensable condition that must precede any sound and wholesome improvement of the schools. And the Institutes, as a means of regular, consistent, and permanent agitation, so directed as under all circumstances and in each different locality, while adapting themselves to the peculiar local needs, at the same time continually to tend in their general drift towards the accomplishment of certain previouly determined ends, have been remarkably successful. They have very successfully accomplished all that could reasonably have been expected, and much more, with less expense than could have been effected in the same direction by any other means whatever. I consider the Institutes the most powerful, the most convenient, the most economical and the most acceptable of the agencies within the control and under the direction of the Secretary of your Board.

At the late session of the Legislature, either by omission or premeditation, in the revision of the laws, the clause of the act of 1856, which appropriated not to exceed $30 to each Institute, was left out, and thus the power of the Board was very seriously crippled, for although the appropriation was the smallest that was ever made for the same purpose, it had accomplished much good work.

It has not heretofore been the custom of our own or of other legislative bodies to make important changes in the laws regulating the school system, without some consultation with the agent of the State who may have its educational interests in charge; but as I had no knowledge of any intention to take away the appropriation referred to, until it was accomplished, I have felt constrained to speak of the Institutes at some length in the present Report.

And I most respectfully request your Honorable Board to urge upon the Legislature the restoration of the clause of the act organizing the Board, by which an appropriation of not exceeding $30, was made to each Institute.

## STATISTICAL AGGREGATE FOR 1863.

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of heads of families | 56,070 |
| " children between four and eighteen | 86,562 |
| " weeks of school taught by males | 11,136 |
| " weeks of school taught by females | 52,908 |
| Wages of males | $50,748 |
| Wages of females | 102,549 |
| Amount paid for board of teachers | 72,252 |
| " paid for fuel, furniture and incidentals | 27,230 |
| " paid for erecting school houses | 20,694 |
| " paid for repairing school houses | 8,714 |
| " of public money distributed for year | 105,783 |
| " of money raised on Grand List | 108,130 |

| | |
|---|---|
| " of money raised on scholar | 25,495 |
| " paid for wages, board and fuel | 242,807 |
| Number of weeks of school supported by district | 27,978 |
| Average number attending school meeting | 15 |
| Number of registers required | 2,977 |
| " different teachers employed | 4,744 |
| " private and select schools | 301 |
| " attending private and select schools | 6,442 |
| " weeks board and fuel raised on scholar | 20,755 |
| Aggregate average attendance of children between four and twenty years | 46,883 |
| Number of scholars between four and eighteen who have attended school | 71,887 |
| " scholars between eighteen and twenty who have attended school | 2,622 |
| " instances of tardiness | 772,530 |
| " instances of dismissal before close of school | 103,928 |
| " scholars having no absences | 7,874 |
| " instances of corporal punishment | 7,243 |
| " visits of superintendents | 6,711 |
| " visits by prudential committees | 3,015 |
| " visits by others | 45,327 |
| " pupils in reading | 64,944 |
| " pupils in spelling | 64,711 |
| " pupils in penmanship | 29,759 |
| " pupils in arithmetic | 42,278 |
| " pupils in English Grammar | 13,586 |
| " pupils in Geography | 24,659 |
| " pupils in Composition | 6,238 |
| " pupils in History | 2,321 |
| " pupils in other branches of study | 3,391 |
| " dictionaries and books of reference | 91 |
| " globes | 181 |
| " maps | 342 |
| " blackboards | 2,428 |
| " clocks | 125 |
| " thermometers | 22 |
| " teachers who have taught before | 3,666 |
| " teachers who have taught before in same district | 1,260 |
| " teachers boarding "around" | 3,154 |
| " teachers teaching without certificate | 52 |
| " legally organized districts | 2,500 |
| " fractional districts | 223 |
| " districts entirely without school | 121 |
| " districts deprived of school by vote | 31 |
| Amount of superintendents' bills for services as claimed | $4,647 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of districts not filing registers | 320 |
| " reports of superintendents printed | 28 |
| " academies | 64 |

## SCHOOL STATISTICS, THEIR DIFFICULTY AND THEIR RELIABILITY.

As usual, many difficulties have been encountered in the collection of the statistics of the schools, by all who have had the matter in charge. But the general character of the statistical returns has steadily improved since the beginning of the attempt to gather them in this State, although it must be confessed that further improvement is not by any means impossible. At first the officials connected with the schools were entirely unaccustomed to any effort of the kind, and did not succeed as well as they have recently done. And the officials and all others, including many intelligent friends of education, failed to be sufficiently impressed with the importance of the end in view, as well as of the means upon which reliance must necessarily be had. It does not appear necessary or desirable to go into an argument in support of the value of accurate knowledge of the condition of the schools. Few intelligent men at present entertain any doubts upon the subject, for it is perfectly apparent that energetic and effective action or legislation for the progressive and wholesome improvement of the means of general education can only be expected when it proceeds under the intelligent direction of accurate and reliable knowledge of the condition and wants of the schools. This proposition is always and every where true, and is still more than commonly true in our State, where a prevalent suspicion, and dread of "fanciful and hazardous educational theories," as they have often been styled, were acceptable excuses for the absence of all reformatory effort. The collection and publication of statistical information was thus particularly desirable, as the only corrective of general apathy and as the only safe and valuable basis for thought, for discussion, for practical effort and for legislation.

The statistics gathered in the first year sufficiently vindicated the general design and created a profound effect upon the minds of many—but while thus the general result has received a tolerable appreciation by many, the means by which alone the result can ever be attained have not been so fortunate, and many who appreciate and make valuable use of the statistical aggregates, are inclined to think and care little for the registers; and this feeling operates upon the minds of school officials and tends to make them heedless or negligent. It will be seen from the reports of the superintendents that while many of the registers have been accurately kept and filled out by the teachers, the work of the district clerks has often been done in a bungling and imperfect manner.

As has been stated before in former reports, the facts about the

schools are and must always be, obtained, if at all, by gathering from different sources of guardianship and supply. Under our system the teachers, the district clerks and the superintendents must each be called upon to contribute a portion of the statistical knowledge desired, because different portions of the required facts fall under the exclusive official cognizance of each of these various individuals; and whatever be the means of gathering from these diverse sources such knowledge as is sought, some instrumentality very similar to if not in character identical with, a school register must be used. The necessary work cannot be done without such help. The co-operation of intelligent men in every community with the superintendent in securing a full compliance with the law on the part of teachers and district clerks, in the keeping, filling and filing of the registers is very desirable and would do much good.

The registers used in our schools are similar in character to those in use in the several other States, though more full than is generally the case and cost less than any in use that are as good. Wherever similar registers have been used they have been approved, and elsewhere experience has shown that the supply of registers when furnished by the State, as is done in Vermont and Massachusetts, is far more certain as well as less costly, than when obtained in any other way. Mr. Rice superintendent of public instruction in New York, urges this State supply in his last report and quotes from his predecessor Mr. Van Dyke, who says:—"Could each district be furnished "with a school register, substantially bound, properly ruled, and so "divided as to show the name and age of each pupil, the time of his "entrance into the school, and each day of his attendance through-"out the week, month and term; imposing little labor on the teacher "and removing all excuses for inaccuracy, while it would form a "continuous record of the school for successive years, it would con-"stitute the greatest boon which could at this time be conferred on "our common schools. * * * And at the close of the year a "transcript of attendance could be made that would be in all re-"spects reliable, both as a matter of general information and an in-"dication of the extent to which our citizens avail themselves of the "educational privileges provided by the State."

In correspondence with this office fault is often found by different superintendents as well as by selectmen on account of the number of questions inserted in the registers and in the statistical schedules; and the hearty co-operation of all is so desirable, that I shall be excused for dwelling a little upon this. The registers and statistical schedules must correspond in order to the convenience of the superintendents themselves, as well as that of others who have to do with collecting or referring to the statistics. One of the important ends to be attained is, by the collection of annual statistics, to enable all who wish to compare the facts presented in any one year with those of preceding or subsequent years, that the exact rate of progress may

be ascertained, taking one class of facts at one time and another at another; but the registers should always give the power to make the comparison of any of the classes of facts where it may be desired. It is idle and impracticable to attempt to present at any particular time and with the same force and minuteness all the conclusions that may arise from all the facts that annually appear in the statistics of our schools; but we need in our hands the means of urging in one year one or two topics particularly—and in another year others, and so on; and thus turning our attention from time to time to one and another class of facts, although each and every fact noted in the registers may not be needed for comment in a particular annual report; still all facts of importance in regard to our schools should be continually noted in the registers for the purposes of possible reference and for annual comparison.

On this account the questions in the registers are somewhat numerous, as what may be called the standard questions are repeated year by year.

And again, such is the occasional carelessness of teachers and clerks that in order to give the superintendent any possible power of correcting gross and palpable mistakes in answering questions that are of importance, other questions are inserted as correctives, and properly consulted and managed will give much relief.

And with all the care and ability for which the great portion of the superintendents are justly charcterized there are traces of haste, carelessness and even of unfaithfulness in the returns of some of the superintendents made to this office, so much so that the insertion of the corrective questions to which I have alluded is indispensable to the satisfactory correction and suming up of the statistics in this office.

The utmost possible accuracy in the results obtained should be aimed at, and every means of possible correction and rectification should be employed by all connected with the collection of statistics, and while the utmost care will be exercised not to over-burden any, it is absolutely impossible to discharge the required duties without a good degree of particularity.

The collection of reliable and valuable statistics in regard to any important field of observation will always require hard work, and a great deal of it; it is an enterprise of a kind that cannot be accomplished without much labor and care and thought; and will of course be more or less attended with vexation of spirit. An occasional wail comes up from some of the superintendents or other officials connected with schools about the difficulty and labor involved in the statistics, to which it is difficult to administer the required consolation.

If it is laborious to make up the statistical return for a single town, it is more so to do the same work for 240 towns—and whoever may be called upon to suffer from the multiplicity of the questions

asked, it is certain that this department does not escape its share of the necessary labor. From six to nine weeks of diligent labor are annually required to receive, inspect, correct, compare and transcribe from the superintendents' reports the matter for the annual report. And the solid columns of figures taken from 240 different returns whose footings are included in two pages of the Secretary's report, cover from sixty to seventy square feet. The work required in the collection of mere facts is of the least attractive description, but it is important, and indeed indispensable; it cannot be avoided. In these dark days, all who care for their country, and for the schools as the well-springs of the power, the prosperity and the happiness of their country, should be entirely contented in doing just this dull, tedious and unnoticed work, for it is valuable in proportion to its want of attraction; there are some things that should be done from patriotic motives, rather than for compensation or notoriety. Whoever cares neither for the schools or the country, should disconnect himself from the schools as soon as possible.

It is not supposed that the school statistics are absolutely correct and perfectly reliable. While all means that are practical are taken to rectify them they do not yet attain to absolute verity. But I have no doubt that they are nearly correct and as reliable as the general statistics of the country. They are sufficiently correct to subserve many useful purposes.

## DURATION OF SCHOOLS.

The schools have remained in session for a less number of weeks than during the preceding year; but with the exception of the last year, there have been more weeks of school sustained than ever before in the educational history of the State. There have been sustained 11,136 weeks of school taught by males, and 52,908 weeks of school taught by females; while in the year 1861–2, there were 14,500 weeks of male and 51,065 weeks of female school. The aggregate number of weeks of school by both male and female teachers, during the past year is 64,044. This gives an average duration of schools, counting both full and fractional districts, of 23 1-2 weeks to each district. Thus it appears that our schools, upon an average remain in session for less than half of the year, or, to be more accurate, less than 46 per cent. of the year. The average duration of the public schools in previous years of which the statistics have been obtained has been as follows: in 1860, 23 33-100 weeks, in 1861, 21 73-100 weeks, in 1862, 24 29-100 weeks. We discover then a small gain upon the duration of the schools in 1860, and a more decided gain upon that of 1861, but a falling off from that of 1862. Although this loss is fairly attributable without doubt, in a measure, to the necessity of economy and the scarcity of labor growing out of the condition of public affairs, still the record is not as creditable as we could wish. The statistics of Massachusetts exhibit an aver-

age duration of eight months and one day, and an increase of one day for the year last past. To the thoughtful observer of the operation of a system of schools, the average duration of the schools is always a matter of peculiar interest, for, in a course of years it serves as an exceedingly reliable indicator of the general interest of the community, and of its estimation of the opportunities for cultivation. With an inexpensive and yet efficient school system, and with an ability to defray with little sacrifice all necessary expenditures, Vermont ought not to be behind any of her sisters in the duration of her schools.

The average duration of the schools affect so directly both the degree and the extent of that general diffusion of knowledge which is the leading inducement to the organization and support of a State school system, that it is worthy of far more attention than it has habitually received among us; and the public good demands that every legitimate encouragement should be offered to the general prolongation of school terms. And as closely connected herewith, the effect of our method of distribution of the public money, in its tending to lengthen or shorten the average duration of the schools, is a matter of importance, and is worthy of careful scrutiny. Wherever in any State a public fund is distributed to the various districts, there can be no doubt of the wisdom of so managing the distribution, as to make it an inducement to the faithful administration of the school system on the part of each district, and the most direct and feasible method of effecting this end is by causing the magnitude of the distributive share of each district to depend either in whole or in part, upon the full discharge by the district of its duties under the law. Thus under existing laws, three-fourths of the public money which is annually distributed in each town, is divided to the various districts therein, in proportion to the average daily attendance of the children of such districts upon the schools thereof. This arrangement is intended to check the tendency to irregularity of attendance, which has always been full of evil consequences to the schools; and since the enactment of the law, a steady improvement in the regularity of attendance is clearly perceptible. But it is found in practice that the prolongation of the term of a school diminishes its average attendance; or in other words, that the shorter the term of a school is, the larger its average attendance will be found to be.

It will be seen by an inspections of the returns of the superintendents, that this discovery has been made in various sections of the State, and practically applied as very seriously to shorten the terms of the schools. Under existing law, no account whatever is taken of the length of time during which a school remains in session, after the law in regard to the support of two months school by each district upon its own funds has been complied with. And thus a practical wrong results directly from the operation of the law. If district A with an earnest desire to promote the welfare of its children sustains

a school for eight months in a year with an average daily attendance of eighteen; while district B with a more scrupulous economy of its dollars, although having the same number of children of school age, sustains its school for only five months, and from the very brevity of its session, with an average attendance of twenty pupils; district B will, under the law, receive a larger portion of the public money than district A, because the distributive share of a district depends upon its average daily attendance, without any reference to the length of the term. Thus the law operates unequally upon the two districts, and with manifest injustice to the district which has taxed itself the highest in support of its schools.

In the original draft of the school law of 1858, the distribution of this portion of the public money was directed to be made to the various districts in proportion to the *aggregate* daily attendance upon the schools. By this means regularity of attendance and length of term were both taken into account, and each district would receive a share of the public money directly proportioned to the efforts it might have made in the support of schools. But during the passage of the act through the Legislature its phraseology was changed and the distributive share of each district was made to depend upon the *average daily* attendance instead of upon the *aggregate daily* attendance. I have always doubted the wisdom and expediency of the change, and desire to commend this subject to the special consideration of the Board.

## EXPENSE OF SCHOOLS.

Whenever a people are and continue to be fully and fairly impressed with a conviction of the magnitude of the interests involved in the thorough and efficient administration of a school system, there will always be found a prevalent tendency to promote a steady and progressive improvement of the schools. There will be a willingness to accept such modifications of law and such changes of methods as can be made to approve themselves to the considerate judgment of the community; and a corresponding disposition to reject such notions and usages as can be shown to be manifestly injurious in their tendency. It seems on this account important that the Annual Report should contain such a grouping of statistical facts as shall continually refresh the general mind in reference to the magnitude of the State school interest, as indicated by the amount of money annually expended in support of the schools.

From the statistical summary may be collected the facts in reference to the expenditures made in support of the schools during the last statistical year as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| The amount paid for wages of teachers in all was, exclusive of board | $153,297 |
| The amount for board for 64,044 weeks, estimating the same at $1.50 per week, is | 96,066 |

| | |
|---|---|
| The amount paid for fuel, furniture and incidentals, is..... | 27,230 |
| The amount paid for erecting school houses, is..... | 20,694 |
| The amount expended in repairs, is..... | 8,714 |
| The amount of bills of Superintendents as the same are claimed, is..... | 4,647 |
| Making in all the sum of..... | $310,648 |
| If to this be added 6 per cent. interest on the amount invested in school lots and houses, estimating the same at $400 each in 2,722 districts, which gives a gross valuation of $1,088,800, on which 6 per cent. is..... | 65,328 |
| And we have..... | $375,976 |

as indicating the total expenditure for schools during the preceding school year.

It is difficult to see how in the minds of any portion of our people, a public interest which, apart from all its other manifold and peculiar claims to attention, annually involves so great an expenditure, can be allowed to take any other than the highest rank, as a subject of thought, discussion or legislation. And it seems passing strange that while all receive and assent to the proposition that whatever involves an expenditure of the public money, therefore deserves and should receive a proportionally rigid scrutiny and supervision; any should be found willing to allow the administration of the public school system to be carried on without a constant and efficient examination and exposition. For many years the attention of the public mind has been solicited so exclusively to the moral and social bearings of the successful use of the means and instrumentalities for general culture, that the financial importance of the school system, as in its administration necessarily and constantly involving the expenditure of a vast sum of money in each year, has been necessarily lost sight of. From this it has resulted that keen and sagacious business men have been to a great extent averse to intermeddle in the direction or management of educational matters; having, in the preponderance given to their moral and social claims, failed to retain a due appreciation of their practical importance as requiring an enormous pecuniary expenditure.

For these reasons therefore, the annual presentation of the pecuniary importance of the schools as measured by the necessary expenditure of money involved in their support, is desirable. So long as from this annual exposition it authentically appears that the State, in time of peace expends more money for the public schools than for all the expenses of its civil government; and that in each town the support of the schools requires, upon an average, the expenditure of more money than do all the other town expenses; it cannot be considered impertinent to demand in the management of school matters the same patience of investigation and the exercise of the same judg-

ment and sagacity which is readily given, as their just meed, to the direction of other practical affairs. And it is precisely this intervention of the same practical good sense, and every day economy which in all other affairs imperatively demands its full value for every dollar that is necessarily expended, that would speedily and easily double the efficiency of all our schools.

## TEACHERS, THEIR NUMBER.

The number of different persons who have been employed in the common schools during the year is 4,744. The number employed during the previous year was 4,904, while twenty-three less districts were reported last year than during the previous year. The number of districts reported during the past year was 2,722. Thus it appears that of the whole number of districts reported, 2,722, only 700 retained the same teacher during the year, while 2,022 employed two different teachers in that time. The statistics do not show the number of male and female teachers respectively, but if their relative numbers are in the proportion indicated by the weeks of school by male and female teachers; there must have been employed some 3,920 different female and 824 different male teachers. Assuming this to be the fact, and it is probably very near the truth, it will appear that 1,398 different districts must have employed two female teachers during the year. No intelligent observer of the working of our school system can have failed to see how its power for good has been weakened by the constant and often unnecessary shifting of teachers. It is one of the unnecessary evils which for many years has inflicted incomparable mischief upon our schools, and has long needed the exercise of that corrective power that will come from the very turning of public observation upon it. In any field of labor, permanence in the connection between the laborer and the particular work to be done, as well as the facilities by means of which success is to be gained, adds immensely to the power of the laborer. And this rule which is of almost universal acceptance elsewhere, is applicable with equal force in the schools. In agriculture, trade, the mechanic arts or in professional labor, a causeless change of laborers, simply for the sake of the change, is universally recognized as indicative of a most thriftless lack of economy. And what is thus true of every other calling in life, is, from the very delicacy and difficulty as well as importance of the work to be done, still more emphatically true of the vocation of teaching. If permanence in the relation between the employer and the employed is of value anywhere, it is most clearly so as between the district and its teacher. An intimate acquantance with the scholars, their various dispositions, circumstances, and different characteristics, with the parents, their peculiar notions and prevalent habits of thought, and with what may be called the individuality of the district, will double often times the power of a good teacher to mould and inform the changing and growing characters of

his pupils; but such intimacy of acquaintance and perfectness of knowledge can never come suddenly; it must have time for its development. The teacher who is constantly changing from district to district, however good he may be, never has a fair opportunity to develop his real strength, or bring it into effective operation, and so by the ever recurring change of relation is shorn of more than half his power.

And the prevalence of this habit of changing teachers in intelligent and sagacious communities would be inexplicable, but for the existence of certain other facts which similarly need thorough ventilation. Lacking a true estimation of the importance of the primary school meeting, as well as of the great purpose which it is intended to subserve, it is too often the case that the stirring, energetic, strong men do not attend it at all; those who are present failing to see that in the provision for the moral and intellectual culture of its children the district has its noblest work, and that this work should demand the energies of its ablest and noblest men, belittle both the object and the means by the course which they too commonly pursue. In the bestowal of the offices of the district, as is the custom in the distribution of political offices in a larger sphere, the persistence which one may have exhibited for years in seeking, together with the long succession of failures that may have attended his efforts, are often considered to constitute a valid claim to an election; and some one is appointed to manage the school for the ensuing year, not because he has the energy and intelligence required to manage it well, but because he has never been before elected. And thus the maxim of "rotation in office"—the very incarnation of stupidity, with a strong tendency to putrescence—is inaugurated into power over the schools; and a constant change of committees brings a corresponding change of teachers. Or in other cases the same prostitution of office to the promotion of private ends, which so unerringly indicates a tendency to corruption in more important connections, appears in the little school meeting; and, taking advantage of the absence of better men who should be there to guard against just such acts, A, whose son has a constitutional aversion to cutting cord wood, concerts a scheme with B, whose daughter would like a new dress and bonnet, by which either A or B shall be elected Prudential Committee, and then the way is plain for everything except a desirable school.

From whatever cause it may arise, the habit of changing teachers upon light cause, or for no reason, is far too prevalent for the good of the schools, and eminently needs the check which will come from the turning of public attention towards it.

The number of teachers who have taught before and thus have had at least some experience, is 3,666, and the number who have taught before in the same district is 1,260. The number reported in 1860 of those who had taught before was 3,416, and of those who had taught before in the same district was 1,053. It will thus be seen that 250

more of experienced teachers were employed during the last year than during 1860, and that 207 more of these were employed again in the same district. With the present rates of compensation, the vocation of the teacher will continue to be regarded by many as a mere temporary occupation, through which the road lies to what are esteemed to be higher grades of labor; and hence a large proportion of teachers will annually enter and leave this calling. The schools suffer largely in this way from the entire lack of that skill and power on the part of the teachers which, to a great extent, can only come with experience. We may hope a measure of relief from the mischiefs thus arising mainly from the growing estimation of the value of good schools, from the truer appreciation of the skill and power required in a good teacher, from the increasing rigidity of the public examinations and from the increased rate of wages, all of which will naturally result from the continuance of a well directed and persistent public discussion. The indications of progress in the increased employment of those who have taught before are full of promise.

## TEACHERS, MALE AND FEMALE, AND THEIR WAGES.

The amount paid male teachers, exclusive of board, during the year is $50,748, and the amount paid females is $102,549: the corresponding amounts paid in the year previous were, to males $62,512, to females $101,400. The weeks of school reported in the two last years are as follows—in 1862 of male school 14,500 weeks, in 1863, 11,136; in 1862 of female school 51,065 weeks, in 1863, 52,908 weeks. The average wages paid male teachers in 1862, was $17,24, and the average wages paid females in the same year was $7,92, while the average wages paid during the year last past has been, to males $18,20, and to females $7,76.

Thus it appears from the statistics that there have been 3,364 less weeks of school by male teachers, and 1,843 more weeks of school by female teachers, during the year just past than during the previous year, there having been 1,521 weeks less of schools of both kinds during the last than during the previous year.

The statistics for the last year thus confirm the indications of several previous years in showing a gradual and indeed somewhat rapid substitution of female for male teachers in the common schools. The rapidity of this movement has been much hastened in the last three years by the absorption of a very large proportion of the young men of the State into the ranks of the national army; but beyond a question, and aside from this special and temporary cause, there is a decided movement in this direction, and there is every reason to believe that it will continue. It will be noticed that, from the uniform tenor of the returns of the Superintendents, the schools, as a whole, have been unusually good during the year; we have never before received so hopeful an account of their character; and this fact taken in connection with the unusual preponderance of female teachers, proves

the substitution of female for male teachers, to have been, at least, not prejudicial to the schools,

But while the number of male schools has diminished, the average wages of male teachers has increased during the year from $17,24 to $18,20; and while the number of female schools has largely increased the average rate of wages of female teachers has diminished during the year from $7,92 to $7.76. This indicates that the substitution of female for male teachers has occurred mainly in the smaller districts, and the more primary schools, and this is perhaps the natural course of the general movement, for the greater fitness of females for the management and control of young children is now very generally conceded; and it is to be expected that the primary schools will very universally pass into the hands of female teachers. But we find indicated here also the prevalence of a tendency to underestimate the comparative importance of primary instruction, which very much needs attention.

In common conversation, the remark is often made in regard to particular districts that the school is small and backward, and therefore a teacher of ordinary or even of less than ordinary qualifications will be competent to manage it, and will require less compensation; and such or similar language, through a very common use, passes to very general acceptation. Now under institutions whose particular boast is their tendency to the general diffusion of information, and in reference to schools whose very purpose is to equalize the facilities for the acquisition of knowledge, it would be impossible for human ingenuity to present a more cogent inducement to the procurement of the best attainable instruction than is furnished by the very fact that a school is "backward." But, good or bad, such is the reason often given and received as sufficient to warrant the toleration of an incompetent teacher. The strictly and uniformly progressive nature of individual culture, and the absolute dependence of all ulterior success upon the thoroughness of rudimentary education, are of themselves sufficient to establish the position to which the experience of every man of sense unerringly leads him, that if peculiar importance attaches to any particular grade of instruction it belongs to primary teaching. Wherever particular attention has for any length of time been given to the schools of any community or country, it will be found that primary instruction has steadily risen in the estimation of the more intelligent friends of education; and primary schools have continually taken higher and still higher comparative rank.

The causeless multiplicity of districts, often growing out of some local ground or rivalry rather than from necessity, by diminishing the financial and numerical power of many districts, has ministered largely to the growth of erroneous notions in regard to primary instruction, in this State, by lending to false economy in engaging cheap teachers, a force derived from the circumstances of the district which could never come from reason. Few educational points could be more profitably discussed before the public than this, in regard to the comparative importance of primary instruction.

But it will also be observed from the returns of the Superintendents, that the change from male to female teachers is not confined to the primary schools, but that in many towns nearly all the schools have been intrusted to the charge of female teachers, and the testimony is full and conclusive that in very many, if not in most cases, the change has improved the schools. For years the evidence of the local officials has abundantly shown what has been long apparent to my own observation, that very many of the schools, that are in each and every particular among the best schools in the State, are taught by female teachers. If this be true, and it is proved if evidence can ever establish any fact whatever, it is not creditable to the fairness or justice of our people, that the practice of giving to the female teacher, who has often taught as good or perhaps a better school than her male predecessor, less than half the compensation that he received, should so universally obtain. The average wages of male teachers for the year has been $18.20, the average wages of females $7.76.

## "BOARDING AROUND."

The figures show a very considerable diminution of the prevalence of boarding the teacher "around" as the current phrase is, that is, of dividing the expense of the board pro rata among the scholars who attend school, and then instead of collecting the amount in cash, of sending the teacher from family to family throughout the district, in proportion to the extent to which they have participated in the advantages of the schools. During the previous year, 3,354 or 68 per cent. of all the teachers employed in the schools boarded 'around,' while during the year just past, only 3,154, a less number by 200 and constituting only a fraction over 66 per cent. of the whole number employed were thus boarded. This may be a matter of congratulation to the well wishers of the schools, for whatever array of plausible reasons may be urged in favor of the practice, it is beyond question that it works much evil in the operation of our school system, some of which is apparent at a glance, and some of which though perhaps more noxious is less, noticeable without close watching. It is commonly urged in favor of continuing the practice of boarding around, first, that in this way the opportunity is given for the formation of a mutual acquaintance between the teacher on the one side and his pupils and their parents on the other; second, that in this way many of the poorer class who could not and who would not attempt to pay in money their proportionate share of the teacher's board, are enabled by furnishing the board itself to the teacher personally, to contribute their share of the expense, and thus are encouraged to send their children to school, and take a greater interest in the school from the very fact of contributing to its support.

In reply to the first allegation it may be said that if true it is applicable as well to any and every other vocation as to that of the teacher. It is desirable, nay it is indispensable to the success of the physician that he should efficiently and safely administer the required remedies in all cases of obstinate disease, that he should be intimately

acquainted with the character, tendencies, habits and physical powers of his patients. If it is desirable that the teacher, because he also requires in order to success, an intimate acquaintance with his pupils, therefore should board with them and that in proportion to the extent to which they share in his attentions; then it stands proved that the physician who equally requires the same intimate knowledge of his patients, should have no home of his own, or fixed abiding place, but should board around with his patients in proportion to the amount of medicine which he administers, or in proportion to the prevalence of the measles or whooping cough. This seems to prove more than was really required. But in fact it does not appear that boarding around does in any degree promote the intimate acquaintance which would really add to the teacher's power for good. But the most conclusive reply to this argument comes from another direction. A very large proportion of the teachers employed in our schools are young boys and girls who lack both experience and accurate knowledge, and who can be qualified to give competent instruction only by hard and diligent study. Another large proportion of teachers from indolence or intellectual dissipation seldom exert the whole measure of their strength at any time, and always are liable to a progressive deterioration in their methods of instruction from a failure to refresh their minds by constant review and study. Our schools do not receive nearly as good instruction as they easily might receive under the same teachers, were those teachers disposed to exert themselves to the utmost. Whatever dispensation should at any given time draw from the teachers for one year the exertion of their utmost powers, would by that act more than double the value and efficiency of our schools.

The public sentiment should demand this, the exercise of their highest powers, from all the teachers in the public schools, and daily study and effort in the self-preparation for the work of the succeeding day should by common consent, be exacted of every teacher as his simple and common duty. Whenever this is effectually done, all our schools will immediately improve. But this can never be efficiently done, until the demand for this exercise of the highest ability, to be made possible only by daily effort in preparation, shall be accompanied by the furnishing of necessary facilities. So long as the teacher goes wandering about from house to house in search of his daily bread, with no fixed home and no possibility of surrounding himself with the conveniences of study and thought, so long it will be idle and useless to hope for any but common place efforts from him.

As to the second assertion very much might be said. The practical operation of the custom is in most cases entirely unequal and unjust, and serves to defeat the very object that purports to be held in view. In a country like ours where in the majority of cases whatever wealth exists is the result of the accumulation of years; and where by far the larger portion of the citizens begin with small means, it will generally be found that the pecuniary ability of individuals in community will be as their ages. The elderly classes are the most wealthy. But if an examina-

tion of the children in school is made, it will appear that the elderly portion of the tax payers have the least children at school, though generally they have the largest Grand List; while the larger portion of the children come from the younger families. Any tax then that is laid upon the scholar bears hardest upon those least able to pay it. It may be observed in passing, also that such a tax bears unequally because, as a matter of fact, the numbers of children in the various families of any community will generally be found to be in inverse proportion to their pecuniary ability.

Again, as a matter of practice, the board and fuel are in most cases grouped together, and thus as the schools are often managed, constitute the heaviest tax that is laid in the district. The usual method of operation is to vote that the summer school, so far as teacher's wages are concerned, be supported upon the Grand List, the public money is expected to defray the expenses of teacher's wages during winter, and the board and fuel for the whole year is levied upon the scholar. Suppose a summer school of three months, the teacher's wages at the average price for females, $7,74, will be $23,22. The board for the whole year, say seven months, will be at $1,50 per week $42,00, and the fuel will be some $10. So that while only thus $23,22 is raised during the year upon the Grand List, which bears equally upon every individual; $52,00 are raised by a tax upon the scholar, which bears unequally upon all, and thus aside from the unequal bearing of the tax, the largest tax of the year is thus raised.

The lamentable and dangerous result is that a very large proportion of the children of the State are driven practically from the school, and to an extent very much greater than is commonly supposed, as will be manifest from the statistics of attendance. It is indeed to be regretted that, under the permission of the law, a practice should have obtained so generally among us, which causes the taxation for the purposes of general education to be palpably and undisputably unjust and unequal in their pressure.

The annual discussion in regard to the question of how the taxes for board shall be raised, has always been a most prolific source of contention, strife and bitterness, and the abolition of the practice, when it comes, as it surely must, will be a god-send to the cause of common schools.

## THE AUTHORITATIVE LIST OF BOOKS.

The authorized list of books continues to give general, and as I think increased satisfaction throughout the State. That portion of the act of 1858, by which provision was made for the selection of an authoritative list of school books, was at first regarded with a great deal of jealousy, and for many months met with much and oftentimes with virulent opposition. It was assailed as despotic in character and odious from its alleged tendency to the creation of a monopoly in the sale of school books, and its meddlesome interference with individual rights. But

opposition to the law has been as short-lived as it was violent. The law has vindicated itself by its own operation, and while it is now almost universally approved, it has in a quiet way effected a great saving of money. I have not the least doubt but that the amount of money saved by the operation of this single clause of the law, is more than equal to the amount paid to town Superintendents, together with the expense of the Board of Education, Secretary, School Registers and annual Report. The action of the Legislature at its last session, by which the time to which the operation of the law was originally limited, was extended three years with little or no discussion, evinces the general approval of the law within the State; and the educational officials of several of the other States have noticed the Vermont law and its successful administration, as eminently effective, simple and worthy of imitation or adoption. The riddance of the State of the swarm of book speculators, by which in common with all the other States, it had been infested, was a leading object of the law, and has been most successfully accomplished. Book agents have almost entirely disappeared.

## ATTENDANCE ON SCHOOL MEETINGS.

There are various simple and practicable means, within the easy reach of all, by which the character of all of our schools could be elevated and their efficiency increased. Among these a more full attendance upon the annual school meetings of the districts is prominent. The time of the annual meeting being fixed by law, must, or easily may be, known to all, and no good reason is apparent for the very general failure in the discharge of so important a duty. At the annual meeting the officers of the district for the year ensuing are elected, and these officials will inevitably give direction and character to the schools; and thus it is of the first importance that a full attendance of every voter, and a full and thorough discussion in the presence of every tax-payer should insure the selection of intelligent and efficient men to take charge of the educational interests of the district; and, if possible, such a declaration of policy by the voters as will constrain the officers elected to a faithful discharge of their various duties. Mean and narrow views in regard to schools, dictated by selfish aims and short-sighted economy, will often prevail in a thinly attended school-meeting, when the same views would never be even announced before a larger gathering of intelligent men conscious of a common interest in the support of the best attainable schools. General discussion, the keenest detector of selfish and unworthy plans, by public exposure can, and generally does prevent their successful execution, whenever a full attendance renders such discussion possible. The statistics show a very decided improvement in the average attendance upon school meetings in the State; and without doubt the interrogatory in regard to this point, which has been annually inserted in the school register, by securing in each town a record of the degree of attendance to the transaction of school affairs which prevailed, in conjunc-

tion with the establishment by law of a fixed time for all the various school meetings has contributed largely to bring about a change for the better. The average attendance upon school meetings was reported in 1860 to be ten, during the year just past it is reported at fifteen, thus indicating an increase of fifty per cent.

## PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS OF TEACHERS.

The provision of the school law by which the examinations of teachers are required to be publicly held, is one of more practical importance, and may be made more useful than is commonly supposed. The law is, in terms, quite stringent, and if faithfully enforced would go far to regenerate the schools of the whole State. The schools, as a whole, are shorne of their possible strength by the employment of incompetent teachers more than all other causes combined; and any measure that would effectually exclude from the vocation of teaching all who have not the power to sustain themselves therein with credit to themselves and profit to their pupils, would instantly double the efficiency of the schools. But such exclusion can never occur until a clear and strong discrimination is made between teachers that are fully competent to the full discharge of all their duties and those who are not. A searching and thorough examination into the qualifications, mental, social and moral, of those who propose to teach, and before they enter into any actual engagement, is the only means of making the necessary discrimination, and in proportion to the rigidity of the examination will be the value of the results gained. To examine orally any person in order to ascertain their competency for the discharge of important duties, is an ungrateful task, and few officials appointed to conduct any such examination are willing to make the examination as rigid and severe as their own sense of duty demands, so long as none but the parties examined are cognizant of the degree of thoroughness with which the unpleasant duty may be performed. The liability of the examinations of teachers to be deprived of all usefulness, by the privacy with which under previous laws they were conducted, is sufficiently evinced by the utter lack of qualifications too often found in the teachers of schools in former years. Indeed the possible privacy of such examinations had nearly rendered them useless, and had exposed them to the ridicule and contempt of all the opponents of our school system to such an extent that all supervision of schools was looked upon by many with derision. As an almost necessary result in many localities the supervision, thus regarded with contempt, degenerated, and was worthy of no higher estimation.

Hence, the redemption of local supervision from its low condition and its restoration to the estimation of the community, became, of necessity, one of the special objects of recent legislation; and in the new school law the requirement was made that all examinations of teachers for the common schools should be open, conducted in a public place, and all be invited to be present. It is a matter of great interest to the community that the law in this particular should be faithfully carried out. If this

were faithfully done a complete deliverance of the schools from the evil influence of incompetent and improper teachers would soon be effected. But in order to the thorough and complete fulfilling of the law in its spirit, the attendance of the citizens who as citizens and as tax payers are interested in the welfare of the schools, is necessary. Without this the examinations though advertised and held in some public place, would practically become as truly and fully private in their character as when held at the residence of the superintendent and without public notification.

If a respectable number of intelligent parents and citizens are present at an examination of teachers, a greater degree of faithfulness would be secured from the superintendents; for the very presence of intelligent observers, would demand and would in most cases secure, a far greater degree of thoroughness in the examination than would otherwise prevail. The presence of such observers would of itself if previously anticipated, drive away aspirants of improper character and of decided incompetency, for teachers of this class would never allow the shallowness of their pretensions to be exposed, as by a rigid examination they certainly would be, in the presence of intelligent men and women; and thus by a general obedience to the law, the vocation would be purged of its most unworthy pretenders.

By a rigid examination thus conducted, a clear distinction would be drawn between competent and incompetent teachers, and prudential committees would be able to select those most competent if they desired; and the presence of thoughtful and watchful citizens, would very forcibly prompt committees to desire the best. As the least worthy would be driven out of the schools, the demand for competent teachers would increase, wages would rise, and better qualified men and women would enter our schools as teachers. Parents would thus have an opportunity to judge with certainty of the capacity of the teacher employed in their own districts, and thus knowing, would give less attention to the thousand idle reports that children are apt to circulate in regard to teachers who insist upon thoroughness of acquisition, and thus the labors of teachers would be facilitated

Much more might profitably be said upon this topic, did the limits of this report allow; and even a slight consideration is sufficient to show that very great benefit would result to all our schools from a thorough and faithful enforcement by superintendents and citizens of the law in regard to public examinations of teachers.

## ATTENDANCE.

No statistical matter connected with the schools is regarded with more interest, or can be considered of greater importance, than that which pertains to the attendance of the children of the State upon the various grades of schools. And it can scarcely well be otherwise, for these figures show unerringly the extent to which the people avail themselves of the benefits and opportunities afforded by the means of educa-

tion furnished by the State. By them, almost infallibly, may be measured the general appreciation of the public schools, and the probabilities of their improvement. The whole number of children between the ages of four and eighteen years is 86,562. The whole number between four and eighteen who have attended at all is 71,887. The whole number between the ages of eighteen and twenty who have attended the school at all is 2,622. The average daily attendance during the sessions of the schools of scholars between the ages of four and twenty was 46,883. Supposing the average attendance of those between eighteen and twenty to have been the same as that of those between four and eighteen, it would give 1,311, or nearly that, as the average daily attendance of scholars between eighteen and twenty, and deducting this, we have 45,572 as the average daily attendance upon the schools of the scholars between four and eighteen years of age.

Here is a result that is absolutely startling to the mind of every lover of republican institutions, and yet there is no fact established by our whole system of statistical observations more firmly, than that the average attendance upon the schools is not larger than is thus indicated. In the practial operation of the school system there is every inducement of pride and of interest to over-state rather than to under-estimate the attendance, and however reluctant we may be, we are forced to believe that which we have no reason to doubt.

Before asking attention to the peculiar significance of this statistical showing, it may be remarked that in everything bearing upon attendance, a slow but progressive improvement has been made for several years. The per centage of attendance has annually increased since the first beginning of the collection of statistics has enabled us to make any reliable comparison. The per centage of attendance, or in other words, the ratio of the average daily attendance upon the schools to the whole number of, so called, school age, or between four and eighteen years of age, in the four years last past has been as follows: in 1860, 51 12-100 per cent., in 1861, 51 35-100, in 1862, 51 49-100, and in 1863, 52 53-100 per cent. When it is considered that this comparative improvement has occurred during a time of unprecedented public distress and embarrassment, it carries with it a more than intrinsic weight of encouragement. A glance at the statistical summary indicates one or two of the sources from which the improvement comes. The whole number of instances of tardiness in all the schools for the year last past is 772,530, and by itself has no very cheering voice; but the number reported for 1862 was 867,452, and for 1861 it was 961,839. Thus, during the last year there has been an advance upon the year preceding of 89,922 cases of tardiness, and upon the year previous thereto of 189,289 cases. Tardiness and irregularity of attendance always go together, and thus it is evident that an improvement in the regularity of attendance, must have had an effect in increasing the average attendance. It also appears that the number attending private and select schools is reported at 6,442. In 1862 it was 7,121, and in 1861 it was 7,785. The increase of attend-

ance upon the common school has thus profited by the diminution of attendance upon private and select schools, and this fact is full of encouragement.

But notwithstanding the cheering evidence of steady improvement, the disclosures of the statistics are truly alarming and should arouse earnest attention and consideration.

If to the average attendance upon the common schools of children between four and eighteen, which is 45,572, there be added the average attendance upon select and private schools, which may be estimated at 80 per cent. of the whole number of pupils, and thus will be 5,153; there will result 50,725 as the average attendance of the children between four and eighteen years of age upon all the schools of the State except Academies. And from these computations it will appear that the average attendance of the children of school age upon the schools of all kinds, both public and private, is only a fraction over 57 per cent. of the whole number of such children. In other words, it is thus disclosed that nearly 43 per cent. of all the children of the State, for whose benefit the public schools are organized and sustained, are entirely absent from school. Here surely is matter for serious and earnest consideration.

In the lowest view that can be taken of this subject, it is manifest that a very great pecuniary loss results from this irregularity and non-attendance upon the schools. By the organization of the State school system, it is intended to extend to every child in the State an opportunity for the acquisition of knowledge; and properly carried out, the system does, through the common schools make ample and adequate provision for the education of all to a certain extent. Whatever portion then of the children, for whom adequate provision is thus made, neglect or refuse to avail themselves of the opportunities granted to them, by such neglect entail a proportionate waste or loss of all the pecuniary expense of sustaining the schools It is idle to suppose that the attempt will ever hereafter be made to sustain a republican commonwealth without a provision, through public schools, for that general intelligence which is universally recognized as indispensable to the well-being of free institutions; no ignorant man even, ever dreams of such an absurdity. Public schools must thus always exist as an important portion of the working machinery of republican governments—the necessary expense of supporting them will always be one of the burdens of citizenship, and from necessity the expense will always be large, and the burden heavy. Indeed, the tax for the support of schools will always be one of the largest, if not the largest, which the citizen will be called to pay. Rigid economy and thrift should be expected and exhibited by all in the administration of the State school system.

Our schools, as the statistics show, cost us nearly $400,000, and thus it is apparent that the absence of 43 per cent. of the children of the State from the schools, causing a proportionate waste, entails a loss of money nearly sufficient to defray the ordinary expense of the civil government of the State in each year.

This view of the pecuniary waste caused by the very great irregularity of attendance upon our schools, ought to address itself forcibly to a large class of our citizens who have been prone to look upon education and everything pertaining to it, as matters that are to be considered solely or mainly in their social, moral, and philanthropic aspects, and therefore as without the scope of the common sympathies and interests of busy, active, shrewd men engaged in the transaction of affairs. It is difficult to see how this class of men can avoid the force with which this wasteful lack of economy in the appropriation of large sums of money appeals to every tax-payer in the community.

The demonstrable wastefulness, to which we have been referring, is not the only, nor by any means the most important of the evils that come from the irregular attendance and non-attendance upon the schools. Nothing has a more disorganizing effect upon a school than an habitual irregularity of attendance. It renders nugatory all efforts to inforce proper discipline, for all true and correct discipline aims directly at the successful inculcation of permanent habits of order, of attention, of obedience, and of correct deportment; and of course the constant presence of the pupils is indispensable to any great degree of success in the effort to give, by proper training in the schools, those habits upon which the value of citizenship so much depends.

The efficiency of the schools in developing the intellectual capacity of the children, is very seriously impaired by irregularity of attendance, and thus it happens that all our schools lose continually a large percentage of their possible power, as promoters of intellectual culture, from a cause which is unnecessary and might be easily avoided.

How shall the cause of so many and so great evils to be removed? is a practical question of great importance. Compulsory measures, if possible, are certainly not desirable if other and sufficient means can be found.

The persistent presentation and representation of the statistics, which show the great extent of the evil complained of, seem capable of arresting the public attention and ultimately so fastening it as to secure a progressive amelioration, if nothing more. The history of the gradual improvement of schools in other States where the same powerful instrumentality of public sentiment has been secured by the periodical presentation of statistics sufficiently indicates the proper course to be pursued. The average attendance upon the public schools in Massachusetts is reported for the last year at 76 per cent. and an inspection of her educational reports shows a very great improvement to have steadily progressed from the time of the publication of annual reports of the statistics of her schools.

The prevalent indifference in this State to this very important matter might find a very effective reproof in the fact that some of the large cities in our coutry have, by constant and vigorous efforts and persistent discussion secured a regularity and constancy of attendance upon their schools, that to us seems almost miraculous. In some of the Western

cities 90, 91 and even 92 per cent. has been reached as the average attendance upon the schools for a year together. Our own average appears sufficiently small and mean by comparison, from very shame, to arouse us to more determined efforts.

## SCHOOL APPARATUS.

The least creditable portion of the statistics, is that which relates to the condition of the schools in regard to the articles of apparatus furnished to them. While some advance appears from the statistical reports to have been made within the last four years, I am ashamed to say that I fear there is not a single free state that is not decidedly in advance of Vermont as far as the supply to the public schools of the common and necessary articles of apparatus is concerned.

With nearly 2700 school districts, in 1860 there could be found in all the public schools only 126 Dictionaries, 115 Globes, 310 sets of maps, 71 clocks, and 23 Thermometers; and for 1863, there are reported 91 Dictionaries, 181 Globes, 342 sets of maps, 125 clocks, and 22 Theremometers. It will be seen that the number of Dictionaries and Thermometers has diminished, and that in reference to the other articles, the supply is meagre and almost beggarly. I have classed clocks and Thermometers with other articles of apparatus, although not used for a similar purpose in our schools, for convenience of reference. The schools are generally supplied with black-boards, such as they are, because the convenience and necessity of their use, in order to efficient instruction in arithmetic, is commonly appreciated; but there has been manifested very generally in our State a reluctance and in many cases a positive hostility to the procurement of all other articles of apparatus.

It is a significant fact, in this connection that better and more efficient instruction has for many years been given in arithmetic, than in any of the other branches of study required by law to be taught in our schools. And an examination of the schools will at any time show a far less number of pupils engaged in the study of English Grammar and Geography, than in arithmetic, and will also evince the prevalence of a very general deficiency in the acquisition of these branches. A familiar and reliable knowledge of the geography of our own State and Country, and a ready command of simple language in the expression of common thought, are rarely to be found in our schools, in the possession of the children there. But these acquisitions would be entirely within the reach of every habitual attendant upon the schools where efficient instruction with the use of such facilities as are easily attainable is given. A ready command of appropriate language for the expression of thought is seldrm if ever attained except as the result of a long continued habit of consulting the dictionary and other sources of authentic information, and hence the dictionary is not only a convenient, but an indis-

pensable assistant of the thorough and efficient teacher of English Grammar, and should be found in every school house in the State.

It is hardly possible for a teacher of ordinary skill to impart, or for an ordinary pupil to acquire, a satisfactory and clear knowledge of the elements of Geography without the intervention of Globes and outline maps as means of illustration. Latitude, longitude, day and night, the changes of the seasons, the relative position and size of the different divisions of land and water, and of the different countries upon the earth; remain forever mysteries to many from the great difficulty of comprehending the phraseology of the text book, or of oral instruction, unaccompanied by any tangible means of explanation and illustration. It is simply the truth to say that a teacher can give and will be likely to give more and more valuable instruction with the asssistance of globes and outline maps in three months, in elementary geography, than he can give without their aid in six months.

Successful discipline of schools depends very much upon the perfect orderliness, and exact punctuality of every exercise and every movement, and can seldom, if ever, be found to prevail except in conjunction therewith. In every well regulated school, each hour and each portion of an hour has its appropriate work, to which it is exclusively and religiously devoted and such an arrangement is found to be equally indispensable to the economical use of the time of the school, as it is to the inculcation of those habits of exactness and promptitude that are among the the most valuable results of proper school culture. On this account a clock so placed that all the movements of the school may be indicated and controlled by it, may be made valuable in the management of the school, and should form part of the equipment of every school house.

The unhealthiness of school rooms from want of proper fuel, from improper construction of houses, from want of ventilation and from an entire lack of judgment and care in the regulation of the temperature, has been proverbial among our people many years. One of the first, and an indispensable means of securing from the teacher the exercise of faithful and careful attention to the regulation of the temperature of the school room is a thermometer, so placed as constantly to remind him of his duty, and give him the power intelligently to discharge it. It is indeed pitiful to be informed by the statistics that but 125 of our school houses are provided with clocks, and only 22 of them have thermometers.

The convenience and, in the light of common economy, the necessity of improved agricultural implements for the profitable conduct of the ordinary operations of the farm are no more clearly demonstrable and indeed are no more fully understood, than is the convenience of such articles of apparatus as have been referred to, in the every day operations of the school room. And it is a matter of the

first importance that every effort should be made to produce a decided change of public sentiment upon the subject. It is to be hoped that the annual presentation of the facts in reference to the deplorable and it may be said disgraceful lack of the most ordinary and necessary facilities for the ordinary work of instruction in the schools, will cause the slight improvement of the last few years to become more rapid and more wide-spread.

## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.

The reports of the local superintendents concur in declaring the schools of the State to be in a better condition than ever before in all matters appertaining to deportment; and this fact derives a very peculiar significance, when taken in connection with the statistical report of the number of instances in which resort has been had to corporal punishment, as compared with the number reported in former years. In 1860 the number of instances of corporal punishment reported was 9,882, and during the past year the number reported was only 7,243. By this a diminution appears to have occurred in four years of 2,639 instances, or in other words of more than 27 per cent. or more than 6 per cent. in each of the four years. At some future time a full discussion of the whole subject of school discipline should be made in the annual report, but the limited space at command will not admit of such discussion at the present time. It is eminently worthy of consideration however, that the last four years of the history of our schools should have been marked by an extensive substitution of female for male teachers, by a diminished resort to corporal punishment, and by a general improvement in the deportment of the schools.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS TO THE TOWNS.

In many of the towns the custom prevails of expecting and receiving from the town superintendent a detailed and careful report of the condition of the schools for the preceding year. This report is rendered at the March meeting, and in some of the towns the superintendent's report is printed previous to the meeting, in connection with the reports of the other town officers, and distributed to the voters. From the statistics it appears that the reports of the superintendents were printed in twenty-eight towns during the past year. An annual report read to the citizens assembled in town meeting may be, and when carefully and conscientiously drawn by the officer whose especial duty it is to be very familiarly acquainted with the schools, would be very likely to be, of very great service. The successful and economical management of the schools is not only a matter of great and especial interest to every individual parent and tax-payer in his own particular district, but in a pecuniary, as well as a moral and social view, it is a very important general interest to the town, which under the general school law is required to tax it-

self as a town for their support. But the town meeting affords the only opportunity for the discussion and direction of all the general interests of the town. It is here that provision is made for roads, bridges, the support of the poor, and the care of the town property, and unless thus presented before the whole town, all such general interests are likely to be neglected. This is especially true of the educational interests of any town. The equalization of local taxes for the support of necessary schools depends almost entirely upon a careful and judicious division of the territory of the town into districts, and this division requires constant supervision and frequent changes. The unnecessary multiplication of districts which has derogated largely from the efficient operation of the school system comes from hasty and inconsiderate town action in most cases. And generally, the power and success of the schools of any given locality or community depends very much, indeed almost entirely, upon the extent to which the public sentiment of the community, aroused and interested by public discussion, and presentation of the importance and value of good schools, is brought to bear practically and actively in the direction and management of the schools, by the selection of able and proper men to take charge of them and in furnishing for their accommodation proper teachers, houses, conveniences, and equipments.

Nothing can ever be more directly or powerfully conducive to the production of the requisite public interest and energy than the careful and judicious public exposition of the condition, wants, excellencies and defects of the schools of each community, by the official to whose charge and supervision they have been intrusted for each previous year, before that community in full town meeting.

It is a little singular that while the custom of making an annual report to the March meeting has been quite widely adopted by superintendents and exacted by the special direction of many towns; there can be found in the law no specific requirement of such annual report, although in the clause regulating the compensation of the town superintendent, it is provided that he shall receive a reasonable sum for his annual report. And I suggest to the Board the expediency of an effort to secure such legislation as shall make the rendition of an annual report a portion of the regular duties of the town superintendents of schools.

## TOWN SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

There are many measures that might easily be adopted with very little trouble or expense, by individuals uniting together, or by towns or communities, by means of which decided improvement could be effected in all our schools. Among them one which has been most advantageously employed in this State and elsewhere, is well worthy of attention; it is the formation and support of town school libraries. As has been stated, our schools always have been

and for a long time, will continue to be, placed under the instruction and guidance, to a very great extent, of quite young teachers, who neither have, nor can be expected to have, either the skill or experience so necessary to make success possible in this vocation. Again a large proportion of teachers in the schools who find themselves surrounded by an apathetic or indifferent community, do violence to their own convictions of duty, become sluggish and inert, and fail to bring into operation the power which they really possess. The loss to our schools from these two causes is much greater than would be supposed by one not quite familiar with the schools as they are. The provision of a quiet and fixed boarding place will do much to counteract the tendencies alluded to, and if, in addition, each town, or community would provide a well selected library, even of small size, which shall contain the most suggestive and valuable books upon schools, school management, and school studies, &c., of which so great an abundance exists, the inducements to the faithful discharge of duty would be multiplied and strengthened, and very many young and unskillful teachers would reap large benefits for themselves and their schools. An enterprise of this kind was started in Hartford, in Windsor County, of this State, a year or two since, under the direction and at the instance of Rev. B. F. Ray, then superintendent of that town; and although he was perhaps one of the most energetic and valuable superintendents that I have known in the State, no one of his measures was productive of more immediate and decided benefit to the schools than his establishment of a town school library. It is to be hoped that such libraries may become common.

## TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

The voluntary associations of teachers, of various kinds that have sprung into existence during the few years last past, deserve something more than a casual mention. When, after a comparative silence of several years, the law organizing the Board of Education organized and put in operation a systematic and regular agitation and discussion of the many practical questions relating to the welfare of the common schools; a fresher and stronger interest in the subject of education seemed simultaneously to take possession of the minds of many of the best friends of the schools, both among the teachers and the citizens. And one of the most hopeful results of the discussion made at the instance of the Board, was the formation in different parts of the State of voluntary associations by teachers who were actually engaged in giving instruction in the schools, in conjunction with friends of education from the ranks of the citizens. These associations are of various kinds and have become quite numerous. Some of them are local, in a sense, and confine themselves within the limits of a district, or town, and some are formed by the citizens of a whole county. Very much good has been accomplished through the instrumentality of these associations, and

many of their public meetings have been very largely attended and very ably sustained. Often one hundred and sometimes one hundred and fifty practical teachers have been found together at these gatherings. Independent of any connection or dependence upon the Board or its agents, and composed largely of judicious and experienced teachers and thoughtful citizens, the movements of the Board and Secretary, the positions taken, the measures recommended, are all scrutinized and commented upon with perfect freedom, and when then they receive general commendation, it is of service and is valuable. The State Teachers' association, which was organized many years since, has derived new strength and power within the few years past, and its annual meetings are rarely exceeded for ability or well sustained interest, by any public meetings in the State, and latterly have been very largely attended and have exerted a wide and important influence. As agencies for stirring and energizing the public mind these associations are invaluable, and accomplish a very necessary work more effectually than it can otherwise be done. So highly is the efficacy of such associations valued in Massachusetts, that by a general law, it is provided that: "When a County "association of teachers and others holds semi-annual annual meet-"ings, of not less than two days each, for the express purpose of "promoting the interests of public schools, it shall receive fifty dol-"lars a year from the commonwealth."

They are surely deserving of the approbation, the encouragement and the assistance of all intelligent men and women in our own State

## REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATES.

The laws in regard to the revocation of certificates of teachers, deal with a very delicate and difficult subject, and will necessarily need amendment from time to time in order to meet adequately the varying circumstances of the schools. Until within a few years the schools often suffered severely in different localities from the necessary sanctity attaching to the contract between the teacher and the Prudential Committee of the district; for it had been held by our Courts that after such contract had been made with the teacher, the district, as such, ceased to have any controlling power over it; and much inconvenience and wrong grew out here-from in many districts. It not uncommonly happened that through the indifference of the voters in districts, improper selections of Prudential Committees were made, and such committees, seeking either the pecuniary relief of relatives, or friends, or dependents, than the good of the schools, engaged the services of persons entirely incompetent and improper to be placed in the position of teacher. And when afterward the incompetency of the teacher became patent to all, and acknowledged and admitted by all in the district except the official agent of the district, there seemed to be no remedy under former laws for the district; for,

under the decision alluded to, a unanimous request or positive direction to the committee to dismiss the teacher was of no avail against the indifference or obstinacy of that official.

Many instances occurred, where, after the incompetency of the teacher was such as to drive from the school nearly all the children, and thus make the school entirely useless, and where the severance of any connection between the teacher and the school was demanded by the unanimous vote of the district, the district was utterly powerless; and the obstinate will of one man, by a perversion of official authority ruled supreme.

And again, much injury resulted to the schools from the same cause, in another direction; for the declared impossibility of annulling or avoiding the contract between teacher and committee, except at the instance and with the consent of at least one of the parties directly interested, rendered inoperative one of the most certain and usual means of improving the schools. The judicious and kindly advice of the Superintendent has often enabled young and inexperienced teachers, who were disposed to profit thereby, to improve very much the instruction which they imparted, and in this way many schools have been rendered passable and often useful, which otherwise would have been good for nothing, if not positively injurious. And herein consists the usefulness of school supervision to a great degree, so long as so large a proportion of our teachers are immature in years and in judgment.

But if the teacher, through self-conceit or perverseness is disposed to reject all such aid, however conscious of its propriety and necessity; all advice and assistance, must, in such cases, be thrown away, so long as the Superintendent has no power to enforce his advice and injunctions, and so long as the teacher, relying upon the inviolability of his contract secures by whatever means the approbation of his official employer and is able to laugh at all other intervention.

A sense of propriety everywhere in the State demanded protection for the schools against these two prolific sources of evil; and when, by the law of 1858, power was given to superintendents, for certain specific causes to revoke the certificate of the teacher, whose contract thereupon became null and void; the good sense of the majority recognized the necessity for some such provision, and concurred in the propriety of the amendment.

From its first enactment, the law has met with decided opposition from a portion of the people, which is not much to be wondered at, as the law from necessity and in order to its own efficiency had, as every law to accomplish in the same way similar ends must have, an appearance of severity and arbitrariness.

Quite an outcry arose, and it was alleged that the law conveyed to the Superintendent a "one man power" that was exceedingly anti-republican and dangerous; when, in truth, the deliverance of every district from the "one man power" which an evil disposed or selfish

or obstinate Prudential Committee might under certain circumstances exercise, and which in repeated instances had been exercised, was the very object of the law ; and when it was patent to inspection that the danger arising from the possession of irresponsible power by the Prudential Committee, from the effects of a perversion of which under the decision of Court the district had no relief, was much diminished by sharing it with the Superintendent.

Much causeless solicitude also arose from the allegation that the bestowment upon the Superintendent of the power to revoke certificates, took away from the Prudential Committee, the official agent of the district, all power to dismiss an incompetent or improper teacher ; and that on this account the law was arbitrary and hateful.

But in truth there was and is no foundation for such an assertion ; because, while the existence of the power to revoke certificates enabled each district to guard itself from imposition arising from the wilfulness or malice of an obstinate committee, it did not divest the Prudential Committee of a single jot or tittle of power. After, as before, the Prudential Committee could discharge a teacher for known incompetency, or for non-fulfilment of his contract, and this whether the teacher had one or one thousand certificates.

The existence of these prejudices and wrong notions in regard to the law is very fully disclosed through the correspondence of this office ; and therein also it appears that sounder and more satisfactory opinions have been constantly gaining ground until the violence of the original opposition to this portion of the new school law has measurably subsided; and this in direct proportion to the spread of correct information arising from public discussion and official correspondence.

But however necessary may be the existence of such a power of revocation, and of its necessity and expediency I have not a doubt, the exercise of the power is always a delicate matter, and always will be surrounded by difficulties ; and the public are well guarded from injuries that might arise from a hasty or injudicious exercise thereof, by the legislation of the last session of the Legislature, which gives to districts the power practically to overrule the action of the Superintendent, and by a majority vote retain a teacher whose certificate has been revoked. The checks and guards against the undue or improper exercise of so important a power are of the utmost consequence, and I would suggest to the Board restoration of a provision that was contained in the original draft of the act of 1858, by which the Superintendent was required, whenever he revoked the certificate of a teacher, to file in writing, in the Town Clerk's office a statement of the reasons and causes of his action. Such a requirement would enhance the apparent importance of the revocation of a teacher's certificate and increase the caution and consideration attending such official action ; it would effectually guard in almost every case against a revocation for light or insufficient causes ; it would, whenever justly and reasonably made, cause such revocation to vindicate

itself, and so satisfy the communities; and it entirely divests the official act of all appearance of harshness.

## GRADED SCHOOLS.

Upon the completion of the organization of the State Board of Education by the appointment of a Secretary, in the month of January, 1857, a letter of instructions to the Secretary, intended to furnish him with general directions and to inform him of the wishes and views of the Board, was by their direction issued. In this letter it was stated that "It is the opinion of the Board that the system of "common schools as now established by law, in this State, is a good "one, adapted to the spirit of our institutions and the character of "our people, and capable by its own natural growth to meet the "growing wants of our communities." These instructions were immediately made public, in order that there might be no misapprehension of the views of the Board, or of the spirit of the policy which might be expected from them.

To the earnest and thoughtful friends of general education, who, through and in spite of the many imperfections of existing schools, had been able to detect the possible capacities of the school system, but whose hopes had almost perished from their knowledge of the long prevalent want of appreciation and mal-administration, brought about by a variety of causes, under which the practical operation of the system had labored, these declarations of the Board were emphatically words of cheer; for they indicated a confidence in the intrinsic capacity of the established system; and promised an earnest and judicious endeavor on the part of the Board to develop the capacity and demonstrate the adaptation of the system, by a cautious and persistent effort.

To those who who were hostile to any but the most stinted and least expensive provision for schools that could be made to seem to consist with the character of the State and its other institutions; and to those who, from an utter despair of the competency of the existing school system, whether caused by want of knowledge of its possible power, or want of courage to carry out its provisions, had been asserting that the whole system of schools was a failure, and nothing but an utter destruction of it and an entire reconstruction could give any promise of improvement; to both these classes the declarations of the Board were unacceptable.

The entire lack of educational agitation for several years had caused, or rather permitted to exist, an apathy and an indifferent quietude of the public mind in regard to the schools, which operated unfavorably upon them, degrading them first in the general estimation, and then as a natural consequence of such degradation, thereby bringing down the standard both of requirement and of acquisition in the schools, and making them unworthy of any high regard, and then the low condition of the schools was made the excuse for still

more general neglect; and so the prevalent indifference and want of confidence in the common schools seemed to be not without reasonable cause.

The habit prevailed of comparing the results accomplished by schools here, with those attained in other States, without any reference to such difference of attending circumstances as might exist, however powerfully that difference might manifestly affect the efficiency of the schools themselves; and any discredit that thus might result from such comparison was, as was supposed, attributable solely to some organic deficiency in the State school system.

Our own State adjoining the commonwealth of Massachusetts, and constant intercourse subsisting between her citizens and our own, the comparison most apt to be made, and in reality most frequently made, was that between the education actually given in the public schools in Massachusetts and that given in the public schools in Vermont. It was found that, in Massachusetts, more money was raised and expended; more schools and of greater variety were sustained; sessions of schools were much longer; a greater variety of studies and of a higher grade were pursued; a much larger average attendance of pupils was attained; a better class of teachers was employed; a higher rate of compensation was given to the teachers; and a much stronger and warmer regard for the public schools existed. It cannot be deemed very strange that many minds, without stopping to give any consideration to the many surrounding and accompanying circumstances, that might have an important bearing in the one case or the other, should jump at the conclusion that the superiority of the schools thus ascertained by comparison to exist in the State of Massachusetts, was to be attributed solely to the intrinsic excellence of her school system and the organic weakness of our own. As a matter of fact, such an impression did prevail extensively among our people, and somewhat, but to a less extent, does still exist.

Without doubt there are organic differences between the school systems of these two States, and some of the differences are important both in character and in the effects thereby produced; but alone are not by any means sufficient to account reasonably for the very great differences in the results produced. It may as truly be said of school systems as of systems of government, that a system organically inferior may be so judiciously and faithfully administered, as to do more good than will result from the careless and inefficient operation of a system much more perfect. That the school system of the State of Massachusetts taken as a whole, is superior to any other school system in existence, is probably true. Having occupied public attention and engaged public discussion for two hundred years; having employed in its perfection the ablest minds of two centuries, and attracted to its support the warmest affections of the most patriotic hearts during the whole life of that noblest living State; it would be strange if it did not excel. But if we admit the greater ex-

cellence of Massachusetts schools as a whole; an intelligent comparison of the system of schools in that State with that of our own, will show that full as much of the characteristic success that has attended and does attend her schools is attributable to the earnest and intelligent faithfulness with which her system is, and for a half century has been enforced, as to its own organic excellence.

There is a very great similarity between the organizations of these two States, for the support of the schools; indeed the school system of Vermont, of subsequent origin and growth has to a great extent been copied from time to time from that of Massachusetts, with such alterations as the necessary adaptation to the peculiar character and wants of Vermont seemed to require. In both States we find a general supervision of all school matters intrusted to a Board of Education, with similar powers and duties, and a special supervision by local officials; in both we find a compulsory provision of law obliging towns to support free schools to a certain though different extent; in both we find a complete territorial organization by the adoption of a division into local municipalities of school districts with similar corporate powers; in both we find a sufficient provision for all the various grades of public schools necessary in the bestowment of the culture indispensable in the building up of an enlightened and well informed republican citizenship; in both we find a similar though not the same, provision for the improvement of teachers; and in both we find a similar grant of unlimited power to the local bodies corporate to levy upon all property for the support of such schools and of such character and power as shall by vote be adopted. In general and in all the most important features the two school systems are similar. The important differences are, 1st, those of organic construction, and 2nd, and mainly, those of practical administration.

The organic differences are few in number, but as regards some of them, of very great importance. A few I will notice.

The legal provisions for general supervision are very similar in all respecting duties and powers, indeed are almost identical; but the means furnished for the actual exercise of powers and performance of duties vary. The Board of Education in each State is authorized to appoint a Secretary, as an executive agent to carry out the plans and designs of the Board, and this agent is endowed with similar powers and has similar duties prescribed in each State. In Vermont the Secretary of the Board is the sole agent, the man of all work; in Massachusetts the Board may, by law, and actually do employ sometimes one and sometimes more than one assistant, who is a subordinate agent, doing a share of the work and receiving compensation therefor; recently one agent has acted and received $1200 per annum and his necessary expenses. The compensation to the Secretary is, in Vermont, "to the Secretary the sum of one thousand dol-"lars per year, and the expenses of procuring blank forms and post-"age," in Massachusetts, "an annual salary of two thousand dollars,

"and his necessary traveling expenses incurred in the performance of his "official duties, and all postages and other necessary expenses arising in "his office."

The legal provisions for Teachers' Institutes are in character similar, but in the means and appliances furnished unlike. In Vermont this law requires the Secretary to "hold annually, in connection with the Acade- "mies and Seminaries of the State at least one Teachers' Institute in "each County in the State, and not more than two in any one County, &c." And to support these Institutes, the sum of "not exceeding one "hundred dollars" appropriated for each Institute, when the general supervision of the schools was intrusted to a State Superintendent was, by the law organizing the Board of Education, reduced to "not exceed- "ing thirty dollars" for each Institute; and in the Revised Statutes of the last year all provision whatever was taken away. In Massachusetts, the number of Institutes is, within certain limits determined by the Board; a sum "not exceeding three thousand dollars" is appropriated "to defray the necessary expenses and charges and procure teachers "and lectures for such Institutes," and a sum "not exceeding three "hundred and fifty dollars" is appropriated to meet the expenses of each Institute. And in addition, Massachusetts has a generous provis- ion for the support of four State Normal schools.

In both States we find towns required to sustain schools—in Vermont "each organized town shall keep and support one or more schools, pro- "vided with competent teachers, of good morals, for the instruction of "the young in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geog- "raphy, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and "good behavior, and special instruction shall be given in the geography "and history, constitution and principles of government of the State of "Vermont." There is no compulsory or even directory provision in regard to the length of time during which schools shall be sustained, other than the provision by which the support of two months school in each district upon its own funds, is made the condition of receiving any portion of the public money distributed to the various districts.

In Massachusetts the requirement of law is as follows: "In every "town there shall be kept for at least six months in each year, at the "expense of said town, by a teacher or teachers of competent ability "and good morals, a sufficient number of schools for the instruction of "all the children who may legally attend public school therein, in or- "thography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, "the history of the United States, and good behavior. Algebra, vocal "music, drawing, physiology, and hygiene shall be taught by lectures or "otherwise, in all the public schools in which the school committee deem "it expedient."

The legal provisions for territorial organization into local districts are nearly identical in the two States, so far as the Vermont law extends; but there are certain provisions in the Massachusetts law not found in the other. In that State towns may provide for the support of schools

without forming school districts. Towns there cannot change the taxation of lands by redistricting oftener than once in ten years. There towns may abolish all school districts and support schools as a town, and are required to vote upon the proposition of so abolishing districts every third year. There school districts liable to provide suitable school houses are liable to a fine of two hundred dollars for each year's delay in so doing. There, towns may at any time abolishing the districts, take possession of the school houses and other district property, accounting therefor, and may provide school houses and all conveniences for the whole at the general expense. A provision is also there made for the support by towns who so elect, of either day or evening schools for the education of persons over the age established as the legal age of scholars in the common schools.

Attendance upon schools is entirely voluntary in Vermont, and the only inducement brought to bear upon either the pupil or the parent is that involved in the dependence of the share of public money distributed to each district, upon the average daily attendance of its children upon its schools. In Massachusetts there is a compulsory requirement in regard to attendance, which, as much discussion has been had in our State upon the subject, I here append—

"Every person having under his control a child between the ages "of eight and fourteen years, shall annually during the continu- "ance of his control, send such child to some public school in the "city or town in which he resides, at least twelve weeks, if the public "schools of such city or town so long continue, six weeks of which time "shall be consecutive; and for every neglect of such duty the party "offending shall forfeit to the use of such city or town a sum not ex- "ceeding twenty dollars; but if it appears upon the inquiry of the truant "officers or school committee of any city or town, or upon the trial of "any prosecution, that the party so neglecting was not able, by reason "of poverty, to send such child to school, or to furnish him with the "means of education, or that such child has been otherwise furnished "with the means of education for a like period of time, or has already "acquired the branches of learning taught in the public schools, or that "his bodily or mental condition has been such as to prevent his atten- "dance at school or application to study for the period required, the "penalty before mentioned shall not be incurred."

As a proper accompaniment to the above provision, the school committee in each town in Massachusetts, provide all school books, to be sold to pupils at cost, and supply every pupil with the required books, the parent or guardian paying therefor if able, and if not able, the town paying the cost.

The provisions of law for the examination of teachers for certificates and for dismissal are very like in both States. The variances are, that in Vermont the examinations of teachers are required to be public, while Massachusetts has no such provision. In Vermont the superintendent can revoke a certificate only for certain specific causes; and in

Massachusetts the phraseology of the law is: "The school committee "(of the town) may dismiss from employment any teacher whenever "they think proper, and such teacher shall receive no compensation for "services rendered after such dismissal."

The provisions of law in regard to school registers and the collection, arrangement and publication of statistics are very similar in both States.

Provisions for the support of graded or higher schools which although not similar, are, or might be made to be, equivalent, are to be found in the systems of each State. In Vermont the voters in any school district may by vote, divide and grade their school and may direct such of the higher branches of study to be taught as they choose, without limit as to extent. In Massachusetts certain of the higher branches may, in the discretion of the committee be taught in any public school; while the following general provision is found:

"Every town may, and every town containing five hundred families "or house-holders shall, besides the schools prescribed in the preceding "section, maintain a school to be kept by a master of competent ability "and good morals, who, in addition to the branches of learning before men-"tioned, shall give instruction in general history, book-keeping, survey-"ing, geometry, natural philosophy, chemistry, botany, the civil polity "of this commonwealth and of the United States, and the Latin lan-"guage. Such last mentioned school shall be kept for the benefit of all "the inhabitants of the town, ten months at least, exclusive of voca-"tions, in each year, and at such convenient place, or alternately at such "places, in the town, as the legal voters at their annual meeting deter-"mine. And in every town containing four thousand inhabitants, the "teacher or teachers of the schools required by this section, shall, "in addition to the branches of instruction before required, be compe-"tent to give instruction in the Greek and French languages, astronomy, "geology, rhetoric, logic, intellectual and moral science, and political "economy."

Such in brief, are the main points both of resemblance and of variation between the organized machinery for the support of schools in these two States; and a very close resemblance is, upon the whole, apparent, although important differences exist. The chief variant and therefore in this connection, characteristic features of the system of Massachusetts are: first, the compulsory requirement by which each town is obliged to sustain sufficient schools for at least six months in each year; second, the compulsory provision by which every person having control of children is required to enforce their attendance upon the public schools for at least twelve weeks annually; third, the compulsory provision requiring towns containing five hundred families or house-holders to sustain schools of a higher and fixed grade, and towns containing a population of four thousand to sustain sufficient schools of a still higher grade; fourth, the provision for the support of Normal Schools; fifth, the provision by means of which a possible equalization of taxation for necessary expenses of school houses may be attained by the abolition of dis-

tricts, and the assumption by the town of district property and the furnishing by the towns of necessary conveniences for schools; and sixth, the provisions for the more generous support of Institutes, associations and other agencies for the carrying out of the school law and the awakening and informing of the public mind.

If superiority be claimed for the Massachusetts system in regard to each of the six points last enumerated, and as to the most of them at least, it may be claimed with justice; there are features in reference to which the system of Vermont is preferable.

The provision of the Vermont law for the public examination of teachers, is more efficient and less liable to abuse than any requirement of simply an examination in private. The arrangement for local supervision, in simplicity, economy, and possible efficiency, is a good one. The limitation of the power of revocation of certificates to certain and specific causes, furnishes a valuable safeguard to the exercise of a very necessary but a very delicate and dangerous power. The legal provision by which the distribution of the public money to the various districts is caused to tend to the increase of the attendance upon the schools, by making the proportional share of each district to depend upon the daily average attendance of its children, is a simple but effectual means of attaining an important result. And the provision for an authorized list of school text books, is as simple and free from objection as it has been effective, and deserves the commendation it has received in other States. It is doubtful if an uniformity of text books in schools has, with so little disturbance and opposition, ever been so rapidly and fully attained elsewhere.

Regarding solely the differences disclosed by the brief comparison made between the two systems, we do not find enough of organic variation to account for any very striking difference, *other things being equal*, in the character or extent of the results accomplished. But an impartial inspection of the operation of the two systems will show conclusively that in Massachusetts a much higher rate of attendance upon the public schools has been attained than ever prevailed in our own State; and no less conclusively that in Massachusetts a much wider range of studies and a higher grade of attainment have been reached than in Vermont.

The average attendance upon our common schools during the year just past was, as ascertained by the school Registers 52½ per cent; the average attendance upon the schools of Massachusetts for the same time was 76 per cent. The causes of a difference so remarkable are well worthy of investigation. This is one of those differences which may well be attributed mainly to the effect of the law requiring parents and guardians to send children to school, and to the legal requirement in Massachusetts that every town shall sustain sufficient school or schools for at least six months in every year; while in Vermont nothing of the kind can be found, except that towns are required to sustain a school or schools; and each district is given the choice, to sustain a school upon its own funds for two months in each year or lose its proportionate share of the

public money. And any legitimate force of the law thus cited, is much enhanced in Massachusetts by the effect of a constant agitation of the public mind that has prevailed for a long succession of years. Institutes, associations, public educational meetings, annual reports, published statistics, and the frequent addresses of the ablest men in the commonwealth have so long and so thoroughly stirred and aroused the public attention that a positive pride is felt in the State school system, and a deep interest displayed for its success by every inteligent citizen.

But by far the most apparent and the most important distinction in the operation of the school systems of these two States respectively, consists in the wider range and scope of the branches actually taught, and the higher grade of the attainments really made in the public schools of Massachusetts. This distinction is more apparent to all impartial observers from without both States than it can be to citizens of either. In the National Almanac for 1863, which purports to give a succinct account of the civil government, state officials, resources, educational and charitable institutions, &c., of each State in the Union, as well as of the Union itself, and which is generally characterized by impartiality, as well as correctness, the variant condition of the public schools in the two States referred to, is made painfully as well as almost ludicrously apparent, as it discovers itself to such an observer, in the brief mention made of each. After giving the educational statistics of each State, with a short sketch of their respective school systems, of Massachusetts it is said :

"The public schools of Massachusetts are of higher character and "maintained with greater liberality of expenditure than those of any "other State. In all the larger towns they are graded, and the child of "the poorest citizen, entering at the age of five the primary school, may "pass, by regular gradation of rank and attainment, through the in- "termediate grammar and high schools, and in the last named may "acquire an education hardly inferior in extent and thoroughness, "to that of the colleges. If after this course he desires the advan- "vantages of the college or university, the State has reserved a con- "siderable number of scholarships in the higher institutions, which "are at the disposal of the Board of Education; and if he or she de- "sires to become a teacher, the four Normal schools of the State "afford the opportunity of becoming qualified, without charge for "instruction. In 105 of the high schools of the State the Latin and "Greek languages are taught, and in the other high and grammar "schools, the branches taught include most of those, aside from the "classics, taught in the best academies."

Of Vermont it is said—"The instruction in the public schools is "for the most part quite elementary; 62,036, were taught reading; "61,827, spelling; 40,999, arithmetic; 28,337, penmanship; 23,459, "(but little more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the whole) geography; 13,364, (one-fifth) "grammar; 5,580, composition (only about 1-13); 2,442, history; and "3,542, other studies. There is no provision for normal education."

The juxtaposition of the two notices in a work of wide circulation is not particularly gratifying to our State pride, and the essential truth of the comparison does not soften the effect.

It is true that in almost every town, certainly in every village of considerable size, in the State of Massachusetts, are to be found schools of every grade necessary for the education of any and every child to any commonly desirable extent. In these schools algebra, geometry, practical surveying and book keeping, Latin, Greek, French, drawing, botany, geology, chemistry, vocal music, physiology, the principles of government, and political economy, are or may be taught. In the quality of instruction, and in variety and extent of attainment the standard of the public schools of a higher grade in that State, comes fully up to, and often exceeds, the standard of the best academies in Vermont. But these schools of higher grade, although thus academic in their character, and in fact giving a more valuable education than is derived from the colleges in some sections of the United States, are in name and in fact simply *public schools;* existing by virtue of the general school law of the State. And thus literally and actually being neither more nor less than public schools, they are taken as exemplars of the State school system, and thus stamp and give character to that system. Strangers as well as citizens, judge of the efficacy of the general school system, not by the character and condition of the public schools of a lower grade, that are similar in all respects to the ordinary common schools of other States; but from their opinion upon the known excellence of the schools of a higher grade, and then give to the schools generally a meed of praise that should be confined to the higher grade of schools alone. And, judged by these higher schools, no State in the Union can stand for a moment in comparison with Massachusetts; scattered like luminous spots here and there all over her somewhat bleak and forbidding surface, they have wrapped their mother State in a starry mantle of unapproached and glorious light.

Vermont fails in the comparison by reason of her lack of schools of a higher grade. Her common schools will compare favorably with similar schools similarly situated in any other State whatever, and in natural aptitude and capacity for learning, her children bring no shame to her; but of graded schools of higher character she has almost none. As an inevitable result, her common schools, compelled by circumstances to give, in any event, much time to elementary instruction, are perforce compelled in the absence of any gradation, to confine themselves almost entirely to rudimentary education, while instruction in all the higher branches of study is absorbed by and yielded to the select schools and academies. In Vermont, then, the general character of the system is derived from and given by, the numerous schools of an inferior grade and not from the few graded and higher schools that are occasionally found; and so her schools are said in general to be "extremely elementary." There are in a few of

the larger towns graded and Union schools that are in all respects of excellent character and will be found, on examination, second to none in New England. *Why are not more of them to be found?*

This is, at the present time, the most important question that can be propounded in regard to the schools of our State. Why are there not more Graded and Union schools?

A careful examination of our State school system will not reveal any organic deficiency that can furnish a sufficient answer to the question; the reason, if any, will be found in the almost entire failure to make proper use of the means furnished by the State school law, for the organization and support of schools of a higher than common grade.

All these higher schools as established here and in other States, may be comprehended in the two general classes of Union schools and graded schools. In order to a fuller discussion of these two main classes of higher schools, the comparison between the Vermont and Massachusetts systems will be continued, for other reasons somewhat, but mainly because the legal provisions in regard to Union schools are so similar as to be nearly identical in the two States.

Union districts are formed by the junction of two or more common school districts, who retain without any change all their former characteristic powers, and are subject to all their former duties and obligations; but thus associate themselves for the special purpose of sustaining a school or schools of a higher grade. The various districts vote to unite in a Union district, at their respective district meetings, and at the same time agree by said vote upon the time of the first meeting of the Union district. The Union district then, pursuant to said vote of the associate districts, assembles in Union district meeting and completes its legal organization by the election of the necessary officers; and immediately thereupon, and by virtue thereof, the legal existence of the Union district begins, and it is clothed with all necessary and usual corporate powers, for the accomplishment of its peculiar work, which is simply and only to sustain schools of a higher grade for the benefit of the children of the districts thus associating. In Massachusetts the Prudential Committees, in Vermont the Chairmen of the Prudential Committees, of the various associate districts, become, ex-officio, the Prudential Committee of the Union district, having the usual powers of Prudential Committees. All other officers are elected by the Union district. The associated districts are required to sustain each its own school as before the formation of the Union, and these schools remain as before, each under the direction of its own Prudential Committee, while the Union school or schools are under the control and direction of the Prudential Committee of the Union district. The legal provisions in the two States, to a certain extent are so similar as really and practically to be identical; and the only diffe-

rence is, that the law of Vermont goes beyond that of Massachusetts in being more minute and full, and in making provision for the future annexation to the Union district of additional districts, and for the withdrawal therefrom of districts that become dissatisfied. These provisions for the formation of Union districts and the support of Union schools, were incorporated into the Vermont school system more than twenty years ago, and were undoubtedly copied from the law of Massachusetts. Some additions have been recently made to our own law regarding Union schools, and whatever differences exist, are in favor of the Vermont system, But in the lapse of twenty years, less than six Union districts have been formed in this State.

Under the provisions of the law Union schools have existed for many years in St. Johnsbury, Burlington, and Rutland, and have succeeded very well. The Rutland Union school has been peculiarly fortunate, having been always under the management of public spirited and intelligent men, and having had, as I believe, but two different Principals, both able and devoted men ; and it may be called a model school, for all the best characteristics of a good public school not second to any in our own State, and exceeded by few in the whole country. Rutland has shown what may be accomplished under the Union school law.

There is, however, an organic defect in the Union school system, that unless cured in practice by very favorable surrounding circumstances, will always sooner or later make itself very seriously felt. The defect consists in the legal requirement that the common schools in each of the associate districts shall continue to be sustained as before, and remain under the exclusive control and direction of the Prudential Committees of the districts ; while the Union or high school is controled by the Prudential Committee of the Union district, for thus the lower or primary schools are controled by one power and the high school by another. Now nothing is more demonstrable in the management of schools than that where groups of schools stand in the relation to each other of primary, secondary, intermediate and high schools, it is absolutely indispensable to the success of the whole group, as of each individual of the group, that one and the same power should control and manage each school composing the group. The graduation of schools with reference to each other, is the one great practical end to be sought in the formation of a State school system ; no system can be perfect, or nearly so, without it. But such grading of lower and higher schools is impossible, where the responsibility for, and control of, each different class of schools, or each different school, is lodged in different persons. This is the defect in the Union school system, and I consider it to be so serious a defect, as to render the wider adoption of Union schools in this State undesirable. This main defect of the Union school is less likely to cause injury in Massachusetts than here ; for in that State the towns having chosen a general school committee, as provided by

law, to whom the supervision of the schools is intrusted, may, under the law there, by vote, elect either to direct the general town committee to select and engage teachers for all the schools in town, or to allow the control and employment of the teachers to remain in the hands of the Prudential Committees of the various districts. And as a matter of fact, wherever Union schools are adopted, the control of all the schools is given to the general town committee, and they, thus controlling primary as well as higher schools, have the power to grade them fully with reference to each other.

But this particular method of sustaining schools of a higher grade might not be acceptable to many minds; and it is, in fact, liable to the objection often made against all schools of a higher grade, that however adapted to the wants and circumstances of densely populated towns or cities, it would not be suitable in thinly populated neighborhoods.

Hence, and very wisely, by the school laws of both the States referred to, provision is made for the support of graded schools by other methods.

Under the laws of Massachusetts, certain specified branches, "algebra, vocal music, drawing, physiology and hygiene" may be taught in all the public schools whenever the school committee deem it desirable. There all towns containing five hundred families are required to sustain a high school, for the benefit of all the children in the town, in which, history, book-keeping, surveying, geometry, natural philosophy, chemistry, botany, the civil polity of the State and of the United States, and Latin shall be taught. And still further, towns containing four thousand inhabitants, shall sustain high schools, in which instruction shall be given in the additional branches of Greek, French, astronomy, geology, rhetoric, logic, intellectual and moral science, and political economy. Here certainly is ample provision for the support of schools of any desirable grade, and well have the people of that State improved the opportunity thus given in the general law. And Vermont, too, has in her system of laws, provision for the support of higher schools, to which by far too little attention has been given by her citizens. That portion of our school law relating to graded schools is simple and shorter than any descriptive summary would be, and I insert it here:

## HIGH, OR CENTRAL, OR GRADED SCHOOLS.

"When the children of any school district shall have become so numerous as, in the opinion of the Prudential Committee, to require more than one teacher, the clerk of such district shall, on application of such committee, call a meeting of such district, for the purpose of ascertaining the views of the district thereon.

If, at such meeting, a majority of the legal voters shall vote to have two or more schools in the district at the same time, such district may vote to erect as many school houses in the district as shall

be found necessary, and shall, by vote or in such other manner as the legal voters present may determine, fix on the location of such school house or houses.

Any such district so composed of several schools, may by a vote of a majority of such district, at any meeting legally warned for that purpose, direct the teacher of the higher or central school of the district, to teach any of the sciences or higher branches of a thorough education, which may not, by existing laws, have been authorized.

The prudential committee of such district, or a committee appointed for that purpose, shall have power to examine as to the age and qualifications of the children, and designate the school they shall each attend.

Children not residing in such district shall not be permitted to attend the higher school of such district, except with the consent of the prudential committee, who may prescribe the terms upon which they may be admitted."

Such is the Vermont provision for higher or graded schools. It is short, and simple enough manifestly, free certainly from complexity, and not open to the accusation so frequently uttered in our State in reference to the school law of "too much machinery." It has nothing of the compulsion of the system of Massachusetts, and may on that account be less certainly efficient, although the very absence of compulsion may better adapt it to the somewhat peculiarly self-reliant and independent spirit of our people, many of whom accuse the existing school law of a tendency to infringe upon individual rights. But whatever may be the opinion formed of the comparative excellence or inferiority of the provision of our law for higher schools, a short examination of it in connection with the other existing school laws —and this connection must be kept in view in order to any fair appreciation of its efficiency and adaptation—will show its abundant capacity to work great improvement in our schools when fully and fairly put in operation.

The best possible test of such a series of legal provisions, except that of putting it into practical and actual operation, is to ascertain precisely what may and what may not be actually accomplished under it; but before making such inquiry it is well to premise, 1st, that the general law of the State requires each town to sustain all schools necessary to give to all its children instruction in "orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of United States, and good behavior;" and 2nd, that supreme and exclusive control of the division of the territory of each town into districts is given to the people thereof assembled in town meeting. Premising thus far, and still further presupposing, for the sake of testing the capacity of the legal provisions referred to, that the citizens of a town of average size in our State really desire to have the best practicable public schools, let us see what power they have under the laws of the State.

The voters may assemble in school meeting, and by a majority vote may divide their scholars into two, three or more classes They may then vote to sustain two, three, or more schools, grading and adapting them to the wants of the various classes. They may build two, three, or more school houses, and equip each fully with every known convenience or facility for giving instruction. They may by vote direct that any or all of the "sciences or higher branches of a "thorough education" be taught in the higher schools, being entirely unlimited in this matter. They may, by the selection of proper committees, secure the employment of the best existing talent in giving instruction in the branches which they have selected. And then having themselves, without any limitation whatever, selected and determined the character of the schools which they choose to sustain, they may tax equally every dollar of property within the district to defray all the expense.

In a State like this, having still a large portion of territory either entirely wild, or very thinly settled, there will always be found school districts so weak in numbers as well as in property, as to make it utterly impossible for any system to bring schools within convenient access to every child. With these exceptions, it is manifest from the above recital of powers, that our laws in regard to graded schools, from the very absence of compulsory requirements and specific selection of studies, do adapt themselves exceedingly well to the existing educational wants and necessities of the State. If the districts in any town are too small, the town has power to consolidate, and thus strengthen them. Smaller districts, under the law, can sustain a school of two departments, having a primary and secondary or higher grade, and may direct instruction to be given in such branches as they choose. Districts still larger, can sustain as many primary schools as are necessary, with a central and higher school, which may include within its scope any common branch of study. And every town in the State of sufficient size to make it desirable, could, within one year, under existing laws, if it so desired, consolidate all the districts, or such part as is deemed prudent, and have in successful operation primary, secondary, intermediate and higher schools, which should give to every child in the town an opportunity to acquire as thoroughly good an education as can be given by schools anywhere, fitting it for business, for citizenship, for life. There are certainly no legal obstacles in the way.

Great importance attaches to this adoption to a greater extent of graded schools under existing law, not only because the State would thereby be supplied very soon with a large number of public schools of a higher grade, and better character, but also on account of the immediate effect that would be produced upon the existing common schools in various ways. Indeed I consider the consolidation of districts and the adoption of graded schools, as the two measures, which at the present time, have more power to affect favorably the schools

and education generally, in our State than any and all other measures that could be taken.

If we suppose a consolidation of districts and an adoption of graded schools to exist in the larger towns and villages of the State, immediate relief, at least to an extent proportionate to the prevalence of such schools, would be experienced in various particulars.

1st. The adoption of graded schools would increase the expenditure for the support of public schools; and to the same extent would attract to them the interest of the various communities. This would, in many places make the support of private and select schools inexpedient if not impossible; scholars hitherto attendent upon private schools would attend the public schools; their parents and guardians would feel a more direct and positive interest in the welfare and success of the public schools. This restoration to the public schools of scholars pursuing a higher grade of studies, or the same studies in a more advanced degree, would elevate the standard of instruction and of acquirement in the public schools; and thus the whole system of schools would rise in general estimation and soon receive that heartiness and cordiality of support, for want of which, it has suffered and languished more than from all other causes.

2d. The necessarily accompanying consolidation of districts would soon extend itself through the State; the tendency for slight cause and for no cause to the almost infinite division of districts which has been so generally, almost universally prevalent in this State, would cease; towns would refuse to make any other changes than one in the direction of consolidation, except upon the strongest evidence of necessity or great convenience. The existence of a multiplicity of districts small territorially, and weak financially as well as in numbers, and of course in popular power, has inflicted for years, indescribable mischief upon Vermont schools. The poverty and the paucity of scholars as well as of people in such districts if it has not created an apparent necessity for miserable schools because they were said to be "cheap;" has furnished a plausible excuse for their toleration, which has been too widely used to silence expostulation and avoid the effect of argument. "Our scholars are "all backward and there are only a few of them" has been supposed to be ample excuse for supporting schools of an unworthy character, and of worse than useless tendency. Under cover of such excuses the system of schools has, in a degree, been used to stamp with shallowness, and curse forever with intellectual weakness thousands of minds in each passing generation.

It is to be considered also, that every unnecessary sub-division of districts, making two houses, two schools, two fires and two teachers, necessary in the performance of work that could as well be done by one, nearly doubles the inevitable expense incurred, and thus without the compensation of any really beneficial result, the cost of the schools is largely enhanced. It is passing strange too, that practical minds

have not long ere this detected and exposed the exceeding injustice of the inequal taxation made necessary in the support of schools of the same grade, by the entire want of care and reflection that has too often characterized the division of towns into districts.

In one of the largest towns in the State are two districts nearly contiguous, whose relative size and strength illustrate the point referred to. The Grand List of the one district is $4500, of the other $850. The result is that in order to build or repair a school house, or to purchase a stove, one district is compelled to tax itself twelve cents on the dollar of the Grand List whenever the other imposes a tax of one cent. The State is full of similar cases, and wherever found they show the existence of the great injustice, by which under the law, thus by the careless action of towns perverted, a man would be forced to pay five, ten, fifteen times as much for the education of his children in one district, as he would be obliged to pay in another of the same town. Not without both reason and justice, is it said that a consolidation of districts is demanded in our State.

3d. Immediately upon the occurrence of the change alluded to, the districts diminished in numbers would be increased in power; the number of children to be provided for would be larger; the voters in each district would be more numerous; more thorough and intelligent discussions of all questions pertaining to the welfare of the schools would be had; meanness and stinginess would find and fear a wider exposure; and a wise and thoughtful liberality would prevail. Better houses, better yards and grounds, more facilities and conveniences would be furnished. The lonely, desolate, dingy and often indecent school houses would disappear, and their places be supplied by neat and attractive and wholesome, home-like, school houses. Whatever in the way of maps, globes, and books of reference could be shown to add to the efficiency of the school; would come of course, and every thing would be cheerfully and gladly done to cause the acquisition of knowledge, from its very attractiveness, to appeal with power to every young mind and heart.

4th. By all the preceding effects, the attendance upon the schools would be largely increased, and thus a vast economy insured. The public schools, having risen in estimation, would be apt to receive the attendance of many who had not hitherto attended any school. The disappearance of private and select schools, which will proceed with a rapidity proportionate to the improvement of public schools, will increase the attendance upon the public schools, because they will thus become more and more the sole reliance for mental culture within certain limits. And the very increase of the necessary expense of the public schools, though amply repaid in another direction, will have a tendency to increase the attendance in due proportion to the intensity of the disposition, prevalent with most men, to have the full value of whatever money they are forced to expend.

5th. The gradation of schools to whatever extent it may prevail,

will to the same extent, double the efficiency of all the public schools, by relieving them of another great burden under which they have labored. In the lack of any gradation of schools, each school is attended by such a mixture of all ages, capacities, and degrees of culture that to the great majority of teachers, it seems impossible to include them all with any fairness and justice within any reasonable and practical number of classes. A strong and experienced teacher, able to impart instruction in the elements of the branches required in the schools, by oral instruction and with little reliance upon text books, so far as his duty as instructor is concerned, would manage to arrange and classify the school reasonably well. But this is impossible to weaker and less skillful teachers. Hence we find the average number of classes in our districts to be more than twenty; and indeed twenty-five classes are often found, and I have found more than thirty. Now the recitation of his lesson is of as great importance to the mental progress of any scholar as is the labor involved in its acquisition; it does, and nothing else can, furnish the only reliable test of the thoroughness of application, the capacity for which is the most valuable effect of good schools. With twenty classes, thorough and exact and therefore valuable recitations are simply impossible within the limited duration of the sessions of schools ; and with such a number of classes the recitation must tend to become formal and dead; superficiality of acquisition necessarily results and so schools are bereft of their possible power, and years are spent in a vain attempt to master an amount of certain knowledge that, in well regulated and graded schools could easily be gained in half the time.

6th. The discipline of the schools would also be favorably affected by a gradation. No result of good schools can be considered more valuable, than the formation of those habits of quietude and orderliness, of doing whatever is right because it is right, of avoiding whatever is wrong from a detestation of wrong, of promptitude and of strong determined integrity; and this is the real end of school discipline and the actual result of good school government. But in order to accomplish this result a well-digested and consistent plan of discipline is indispensable; and such a plan, difficult enough where all the children of a school are nearly of the same age, becomes nearly impossible, where the same school contains children of all sizes, ages, and capacities. The treatment, genial, home-like and affectionate, that belongs to children, requires an admixture of more apparent power and decision to be equally suitable for the control of young men and women. A proper classification of schools by gathering together children of nearly the same age, would re-generate our schools in all matters pertaining to school discipline.

7th. By such changes, schools becoming of greater importance, and having a wider range of studies would more generally require teachers of better attainments in knowledge and of greater skill and

power. From this very necessity a greater demand for good teachers would be created; and in the supply of this demand better rates of compensation would be demanded and received. The vocation of teaching would thus attain a greater acknowledgment of respectability and a greater permanence; it would become a recognized and practical profession and a larger number would resort to it as a profession for life, willing to seek and actually gaining far better qualifications for the discharge of the teacher's manifold and difficult duties. Graded schools too would for the most part remain under the direction year after year of the same committees, who would employ the teachers of whose capacity they had certain knowledge from actual trial. From graded schools the fashion of permanent committees would spread through all the districts, and the practice of changing prudential committees for the express purpose of furnishing successively different families, in each town, a situation for some member as teacher of the district school, would die out; teachers generally, wherever they had given good satisfaction would be permanently engaged, and the never ceasing change of teachers which has for generations taken largely from the power of our schools would cease. Few happier results could be desired.

8th. The culture given in the public schools modified as has been suggested, would be more thorough and the attainments made would be more reliable and certain than that now obtaining in the present existing mixture of private and public schools. That this runs counter to the opinion generally held is true, as it is also true that the ostensible reason for sending children to private schools is that the style of instruction in the public schools is weak and low. If this be true it is not the fault of the school system, but of those who administer it. Whatever can promote the efficiency of schools and lies within the attainment of the proprietors of any private school in the land, is still more within the reach of the public schools, if the good people so will. The whole community being greater and stronger than any of its parts, can accomplish any improvement in the means of education that is within the power of any individual member of the community. Under the law the public school may have the best conceivable house, the ablest instruction; the possession of all desirable facilities, without the imposition of any restriction, and may give instruction in any known branch of study to any extent with no limitation except such as the people choose to apply; and thus in every conceivable direction may do all that human wealth can compass or human skill devise, more easily than any private school by any possibility can. If it does not come up to its capacity it is because the people who operate its machinery do not desire it to do so, or are unwilling to furnish the necessary motive power. But the public schools thus having at least equal capacity are preferable, because they exist by virture of a general law, which makes them answerable to a supervision which may be as rigid and

severe as human acuteness can invent. Guarded by public examinations against the dangers of incompetent teachers, subject to a constant supervision that may be rigid to any extent, having for its support command of the whole property of the State, with no limit as to the variety or extent of its instructions, if the public school fail in the accomplishment of its work, it is not from organic inability to perform it.

But it is often objected that the attendance upon graded schools would be inconvenient on account of distance in the larger towns, and that they cannot adapt themselves to the smaller and remote villages. There are in the State from seventy to eighty academies, that in their spasms of success, are very fairly attended; and many of these academies, having deserted their own legitimate sphere are giving instruction in branches, and to children, that all really belong to the public school. If a gradual substitution of graded schools for most of the academies were made, it is difficult to see how a change of the name and character of the school need affect the attendance. Those who now attend academies could then with no more inconvenience attend the graded schools. As to the second objection it is answered by the nature of the law providing for graded schools, under which it is not necessary to support a school which shall rigidly conform to a fixed and specified standard; but by which it is provided that the people in each town and district may erect just such a system of graded schools as is best adapted to meet the wants of that town or district, and are compelled to do nothing else. And it is farther and more satisfactorily answered by the actual existence in some of the smaller towns of excellent graded schools.

And it is farther objected that such a system of schools will be very expensive and that the cost of education in the State would be much increased. In the discussion of this objection various considerations present themselves.

1st. Whatever money is expended in the support of inferior and improper schools, is at least money wasted, and often is a costly method of submitting to positive injury, for to describe a bad school as simply useless is to give it a most exaggerated eulogy.

2d. The improvement worked in the schools would more than compensate for any increase of expense that would necessarily be incurred. In schools as in other matter a good article at a reasonably fair price is more economical than shoddy at any price whatever.

3d. The graded schools if more expensive would be less numerous and far more largely attended.

4th. The public schools, when fully improved, would drive many of the private schools and academies, indeed all of an inferior character, from existence, and the saving of expense by those who had previously attended them, would counter balance the increased cost of the public schools. By the statistics 301 private and select

schools are reported and 69 academies. Suppose graded schools to be substituted for the academies, except one in each County, which would be sufficient for all academic work in the State, and that 200 of the private schools are swallowed up by the improved public schools. In other words, suppose 200 private schools and 55 academies are absorbed. Suppose the average attendance upon the academies to be fifty, and estimating board for forty weeks at $2 per week, and clothes and books and expenses at $20, we have $100 as the average expense of each academic student, and the gross amount thus saved would be $275,000. By the statistics the attendance upon the private and select schools is 6,442, which, if two-thirds is absorbed into the public school, gives us a saving of the expense of 4,288 pupils; and estimating this expense for each at $20, we have a saving of $85,760. Adding the two sums we have $360,760. Now this sum added to the present expense of the schools of Vermont and all expended in the support of improved public schools, would give an average expenditure per scholar of the number of school age reported, somewhat larger than the amount actually expended per scholar in the State of Massachusetts, with confessedly the most perfect system of public schools in existence.

Or the feasibility of a partial adoption of graded schools, such as would be adapted to the great majority of districts, may be shown in another way.

Suppose four contiguous districts habitually sustain the average terms of school, six months in all, three months summer school and three months of winter school, paying the average wages as ascertained by the statistics. Then three months summer school at $8 per month will cost $24, and three months winter school at $18 per month will cost $54, or $78 for the year in each district, amounting to $312 in the four districts. Now by expending the $312 in another way, a primary school could be sustained in each of the districts for six months for $192, paying the teacher $8 per month; and $120 would remain for which a school of higher grade could be sustained for four months at $30 per month, or for three months at $40 per month. So that it is demonstrable that a gradation of schools could be adopted to some extent, and sufficient to add largely to the facilities of scholars for receiving a higher grade of instruction without increasing the expense.

From the preceding examination and discussion, it is apparent that there exists no legal obstacle, or organic deficiency that need prevent, or very much obstruct, the adoption quite generally of graded schools, in nearly every section of the State; and it seems remarkable that so few of them are yet to be found, and in view of such demonstrable feasibility and desirability we are naturally inclined to search for reasons for neglecting so obvious a means of school improvement.

This neglect is attributable partially to a want of appreciation of the real capacity of the existing school law. The schools for a long time had failed to satisfy the well recognized educational wants of the State, and on that account, private schools had sprung up and diminished the

attendance upon the public schools, and appropriated to themselves the interest and support really due to the public schools; the comparative success of the private schools, reacted upon the public schools, lowering the standard of culture there, degrading them in the public estimation, and practically and really degrading the public schools themselves; until for years it became the fashion to decry all public schools as low, vulgar and inefficient. Then the low estimation in which the schools were generally held, and their deficiencies, which naturally resulted from this very want of respect, were attributed to the organic weakness of the system, until the notion widely prevailed that the public school system was radically and organically so weak and powerless as to make utterly futile any effort to improve them. And thus, partially from hopelessness of success all efforts to make the most of the existing system ceased. But undoubtedly still greater potency may be ascribed to a wide-spread misapprehension of the true spirit and real basis of the whole system of public schools. The public schools came to be supposed by many to be the public and perpetual expression of the kindly charity and soft-hearted philanthropy of the founders of our republican institutions, who knowing that, until the arrival of the millennial day, there would and of necessity must be many poor and friendless people who would find it difficult enough to make their way in the world without being at the expense of sending their children to school, therefore devised the State public school system as an indirect and comprehensive plan for giving to the poor and weak and helpless the benefit of the charitable disposition of the whole State embodied in a State school system. This view manifested itself everywhere. In the talk of the street, in the thanksgiving sermon, and in the inevitable stump speech, a special laudation of the considerate and kindly benevolence of the fathers as manifested in the establishment of common schools was an indispensable rhetorical flourish. Degraded from its legitimate rank as a centre of thought and interest; the public school, deprived by the gratuitousness of its ministrations to the children of the poor, of all claim to particular respect as a purely educational power; and forbidden by the compulsory taxation made necessary in its support, to demand affection as a clear and undoubted charity, appealed neither to benevolence nor patriotism, and failed almost of course.

It is true that in the practical operation of the public school system, the assistance furnished thereby to the education of the children of many who without such help must have remained in ignorance, tends to make the charitable phase of the school system prominent, but, in fact, the benevolent result of the working of the system is entirely incidental, it formed no essential part of the original design.

It was practical wisdom and keen sagacity rather than tender compassion that instigated the founders of our scheme of institutions to give so prominent a position to public schools. Profoundly convinced of the capacity of men under favorable circumstances to devise and operate by themselves and for themselves, the machinery of a complete republican

government, they recognized themselves as specially and solemnly called upon, as the founders of institutions which they hoped should stand firm and unshaken amid the disturbing and perturbing influences of the world to erect a perpetual monument of man's inherent capacity for self-control and social perfection, they also intended that it should, so long as it did stand, vindicate the general truths upon which it rested. And underneath the frame-work of the institutions which the fathers built, the truth of the reasoning upon which it rests, is as apparent to-day as it was to their own minds.

Man, they said, is a social being; whatever tends to the security and perfection of social existence is therefore, to him of paramount importance; but the perfect security and progressive development of social existence can only be accomplished by that thorough organization of society which is called government; the protection of life and property which is essential to social life, is the very object of government; government, then, protects men against what? virtue? intelligence? No! but against vice and crime; how, then, should the new scheme give security to all against vice and crime? vice and crime grow from ignorance; how guard against ignorance? Primarily by establishing as a component part of the governmental scheme, a system of public schools that should know no distinctions between man and his brother, but should tend to the safety of all, by an impartial diffusion of that intelligence and virtue which most directly guards against vice by banishing that ignorance from which it springs; and secondarily, to give security to all by establishing a system of criminal laws, every infraction of which shall meet with summary punishment.

Thus the school system and the criminal code of every republican State rest upon precisely the same foundation of inevitable necessity. And it may with equal truth be said of the public school system as of a criminal court, that whatever of apparent charitableness may be indicated by the effects sometimes produced, is an incidental result and not the original purpose thereof. There is not a whit more of the charitable in the design of the public school system because, by it many poor children are instructed who would otherwise remain in ignorance, than there is in the organism of courts of law by whose judgment murderers are hung.

Men of the present day are always ready to acknowledge the weight of obligation under which we rest to the fathers for the civil institutions, whose permanence and success bear conclusive testimony to the sagacity as well as patriotism of their framers. But as the generations succeed each other, still more and more clearly will the far reaching wisdom of the fathers be manifested in the establishment of public schools, without whose wholesome and saving influences, republicanism would soon become impossible and democracy devilish.

And not only are public schools in theory indispensable to the growth and permanence of free institutions, but in fact, they do to-day and did yesterday and ever will wield a powerful influence over the destinies of

the commonwealth. By the statistics less than one in twelve attend the private and select schools; and making every reasonable allowance for attendance elsewhere, there can be no doubt but that seven out of every eight are entirely indebted to the common schools for such culture as they may ever have. But whatever gives character mental and moral to seven-eighths of the existing population of a republican State really may be said to give character to the State.

The purely democratic tendency of a thoroughly good and well sustained system of free schools is eminently worthy of consideration. That our fathers were entirely aware of this tendency, none can well doubt. They had just escaped from a social connection whose chief characteristic was a severe and well defined division of the mass of the population into distinctive classes, having little or no social communication, and nearly as hopelessly separated as the castes of the East. A love of religious liberty, a longing for civil freedom and a loathing of aristocratic distinctions of class, were the leading and nearly co-ordinate motives that induced their emigration westward. If the protection of the feeble and the friendless was not a declared purpose in view in the formation of the new republics, the abolition of all existing political distinctions and the putting of all upon one common and equal footing most certainly were both actual and declared purposes. And well they knew the effectiveness of a common school system in that direction. Any measure then that tends to lessen the influence and power of the public schools and therefore their value; tends proportionately to deprive the many of their only opportunities for culture, to limit thorough education to the few, and therefore to undo the work which the fathers labored to perfect. And this may be done from very carelessness and without consciousness of evil, as well as from unpatriotic or anti-republican proclivities, but whenever the evident tendencies of such measures is disclosed, by persistence then the character of the motives will appear.

And from well known facts in the social and educational history of the State, it may be doubted whether the very democratic tendencies of free schools have not deprived them of the sympathies, and alienated from them the interests of many, who yet would not desire to be known as hostile to them on this account.

Based upon intelligence and virtue as their only reliable foundation, our republican institutions have diffused more widely and more rapidly a general prosperity than ever has existed in the world. And as ever before, in the world's history, property, the accumulation of which would often have been impossible without the favoring influence of republican institutions, and whose very security is directly proportional to the intelligence that allows republicanism to exist, here as elsewhere, exhibits its proverbial inclination to exclusiveness.

Few intelligent observers doubt but that the undue and unnecessary multiplication of private schools and academies has affected most disastrously the public schools of our State. The complete and thorough education of a free people is a unitary idea, involving in its success the co-

operation of educational institutions of all necessary grades. No sane man doubts the necessity, perhaps equal necessity of colleges, academies, and public schools. Necessary to the attainment of the common end, they are also necessary to each other, and he is an enemy to education, who under the guise of special friendship for either, allows himself to disparage the other. To say nothing of other functions, the colleges actually furnish to the academies the great bulk of instructors who are preparing for collegiate life, each generation of students its own successors; and the academies, both directly by the teachers they send down to take charge of the public schools, and by the spirit which they infuse into the various communities are fixing the standard both of instruction and acquisition which shall in proportion to its vitality or lifelessness increase or diminish the proportionate number of those who kindled by their inspiration into a nobler determination shall seek the gratification of their aspirations through the higher culture which the academy and college shall be ready to furnish, or leave them entirely satisfied with attainments and purposes that exactly qualify them for a state of insignificant mediocrity. But it is to be observed that the college, the academy and the common school have, each its own legitimate and appropriate sphere, every departure from which by either is as dangerous to itself as it is injurious to the others. When all together, but each in its proper field of labor, co-operate harmoniously and without interference in the work of education, certain progress will be made, as rapid as it is valuable. But where each, usurping the proper functions of all or either of the others, travels out of its own orbit, confusion reigns triumphant, and sound knowledge yields the path to shallowness and superficiality.

For the accomplishment of the work that legitimately comes within the proper scope of academic instruction, one academy in each of the counties of Vermont, would be abundantly sufficient; why then do we find some eighty? It is because the standard of the common schools has become so lowered, that the academies have assumed their functions, and with or without a "primary department," have deserted their own field of labor and are teaching the rudiments of the common branches.

But why has the standard of instruction and of acquisition of the common school been lowered? It is mainly from the fact that leading and influential men, whose pecuniary ability has enabled them to give to their children more than common advantages, and whose children therefore are thereby farther advanced in their studies, have to a great extent taken their children from the common school, and sent them to the select school or middling academy to receive there farther instruction which should be given in the common school. Others and still others, following in the example of their more prosperous neighbors, have taken the same course, until the fashion is set of neglecting the common school by those who fear lest their character for respectability will be lost if they do not follow the fashion. The effect upon the common school is inevitable. Its most advanced scholars have deserted it, its own stan-

dard of requirement and of instruction has sunk, the children of the more prosperous and those of highest social standing have gone elsewhere; it ceases to be respectable. Leading men having taken their children from the common school, do not attend the school meeting, or attend only to oppose anything like liberality of support; they will not act officially in its behalf; the direction of school matters sinks into improper hands; and the inevitable effect follows; the school becomes unworthy of support.

Then men of moral character and social eminence, when appealed to to sustain the school, say: "It is low and vulgar, I do not dare to "send my children there, and I know little and care less about it." In this way the low condition of the public schools, caused by the neglect of those who in this as in other matters give tone to public opinion, becomes a standard excuse for the neglect itself. Those who attend the public schools are largely influenced by the prevalent notions of their parents and the general public; knowing the common school to be looked down upon by their elders, they begin to regard it in the same light, and neglect opportunities which the school still might afford.

It is in this way that the great public school interest is deplorably injured by the multiplicity of private schools and academies which is found in our State. There are towns in the State where the attendance upon the private schools is larger than is that upon all the public schools together. And it is a noticeable fact that generally, where private schools flourish the best, there are to be found the lowest and meanest of the public schools.

And the evil perpetuates itself in another way. The standard of acquisition in the public scoools having been lowered, the pupils leave it at an earlier age, and attend the select school and academy, there to suffer from want of thorough culture, and to return from the academy unfamiliar with the wants as with the character of the common school, young, and wanting both certainty of knowledge and firmness of character, as well as lacking both experience and acquaintance to curse again the commen school by acting in the vocation of teacher.

The large class of teachers who might and would be thoroughly and well trained in public graded schools, is entirely wanting; and from this lack and from the low estimation in which the common schools are held, it is customary to employ therein as teachers, boys and girls, utterly unable to seize and control the complicated machinery of a common school, and of character so immature and unformed that no sagacious man of business would dare to entrust them with the management of his own affairs, while all the community tolerate them as teachers of the school of the district.

And it is not to be forgotten that the character of the academies is as seriously injured by their very multiplicity; as is that of the common school. Instead of that strength and force and permanence that would characterize them if they were few in number and of course well attended and well sustained; they are so numerous as to destroy each other.

Many of them, compelled by sheer necessity to seduce scholars from the common school or prepare for death, use all worthy or unworthy means to attain this all important end. Descending from their true plane, they reach down and poach upon the proper fields of all lower institutions and invade the precincts of all higher; becoming truly composite in their nature, with an even mixture of all the traits of infant schools, and all the various grades of public schools, they combine the faults of bad academies and mock collegiate institutions, and even then, when they have stooped not to conquer but for dear life, at the best, have only a spasmodic existence, their very heyday of prosperity being with certainty followed by a state of suspended animation, their very struggles for life resembling the effects of galvanism applied post mortem, they live and die, survive and perish in a most interesting alternation, gaining and losing their teachers, as unsophisticated and needy young men can be temporarily entrapped and escape; until the reply of the Vermont teacher to the question as to what he was doing, that "he was travelling about attending the funeral obsequies of dying academies" loses it appearance of exaggeration, and becomes a terse and graphic description of the life of an academic teacher.

That this description does not apply to some, and indeed to many of our existing academies, I know full well. Vermont has no wiser, truer, or more clear-sighted friends of education and of the common schools than are the Principals of some of our academies, who have spent their lives in the educational harness. Striving for years to uphold the true standard of academic education, and long and often vainly striving against the tide of evil consequences that have legitimately resulted from the unnecessary and unwise increase of the number of academic institutions, they have seen the State fund for the permanent endowment of County Grammar schools frittered away by constantly recurring division, they have known the best institutions neglected to attend those whose prospectus and actual performance were far from being in accord, and have themselves been often rewarded for the firmness with which they insisted upon thorough culture, by desertion to more easy going schools. They know and will appreciate the truthfulness of the preceding picture as applicable to the multitude of short-lived academies which abound, and they also know and will appreciate the purpose of the exposition.

But to the watchful observer of schools it is evident that the welfare and efficiency and possible improvement of the public schools, is more injuriously affected by the multiplicity of private and select schools existing in the State, than by any other cause, and probably more than by all other causes combined. Many of the evil consequences resulting therefrom are direct, and therefore readily recognized by any who choose to see them; many more are indirect and not commonly attributed to their true source. The motives by which parents are induced to patronize private schools are as various in character as are the schools themselves, and like them are sometimes praiseworthy, and more often of exactly the opposite nature.

The patrons of private and select schools may be classified as first, those who send children away from the public schools to procure instruction for them in branches of study that are not taught in the public schools; second, those who send children away from the public school to receive instruction at private and select schools in the elementary branches of a common education, which are required by law to be taught in every public school; and third, those who send their children to the private and select schools from a desire to imitate the example of their more prosperous neighbors.

Of the first of the above classes little need be said, except that it really is much smaller than is commonly supposed, and that it is much larger than it need be, and larger than it would be were graded schools to be generally established. As was said of the college and academy, so we may say of the public school; it has its own legitimate sphere, and is most useful when rigidly retained there. When the common school reaches out from and goes beyond its own appropriate sphere of labor and assumes to do the work of the academy, it must necessarily fail to do it well; and if it did not egregiously fail, it injures both the academy and itself. Undoubtedly far better instruction in a wider variety of branches may properly and easily be given in the common schools than is now there found, but each grade of public schools should have its own well-defined limits, beyond which it should neither be expected nor allowed to travel. The limits of the proper sphere of the ordinary ungraded district school are very precisely pointed out by law, and the fact that its specific work is thus assigned by law, in connection with the fact that immediately upon the division or grading of a common school, special permission is given in the law to direct instruction, in branches not mentioned, in the higher department or grade of the common school, shows that the design of the law was to limit the ungraded district school to the giving instruction in the special branches named and in no other.

Whenever these parents send their children to private schools, for the purpose of securing for them who have mastered all within the legal compass of the common school, instruction in branches not taught in the common school, and not legitimately belonging there, little objection can well be made, certainly in locations and under circumstances where a gradation of the schools and by such gradation a legal enlargement of their scope is difficult or impossible. But the class of parents who under the influence of such motives send their children to private schools is very small, and would almost entirely disappear were schools graded wherever such gradation is practicable.

Of the second class, viz., those who patronize private and select schools that only claim to give instruction in the common branches, that come within the legal and well known scope of the common schools, more may well be said It is a much more numerous class than the other, and therefore, as well as for other reasons, more decidedly and more injuriously affects the common schools. The absolute right of every man to give the best instruction to his children that is within his power, is clear,

but no more so than in his duty to do all within his power for the support and improvement of the public schools. Having control of all the property of every community, so far as it may be necessary for the improvement of the public schools, every community is bound to see to it that the public school is in fact better than any private school, with necessarily a more limited command of means, can possibly be. If then, in any community, select and private schools, giving instruction in branches required in the common schools, are found to be superior in any respect to the public schools of the vicinity, the very superiority of the select schools is itself conclusive evidence of a dereliction of duty on the part of that community.

But who are responsible for the short comings and failures of the community? is the ignorant and the lowly and the poor, and those who have neither social influence, character, or pecuniary means? It is the man of known intelligence, of moral power, of high social standing, that actually do give tone and direction to public sentiment, that justly ought to be, and that actually are held responsible, for the character of the communities of which they are a portion. But such are precisely the men, who under various excuses, withdraw their children from the public school and send them to private institutions, to be taught there the rudiments of a common school education. And while the right of every man to enjoy his own is not denied, and is admitted to be indisputable, it is to be remembered that it is just as clearly every man's social and civil duty so to enjoy his own as not to infringe upon or diminish his neighbor's enjoyment of rights that belong to him. If the withdrawal of the children of the prosperous and the intelligent and the influential from the public school, produced no evil effects upon those schools, then as far as the discussion of the present point is concerned, such a course would be comparatively unobjectionable. But as has been shown, the withdrawal of the children of the leading men for intelligence and social power and standing, diminishes the interest of such men in the public schools, deprives them of the most advanced scholars, lowers the standard of instruction and of acquisition, allows the direction of this important interest to fall into the hands of inferior men, diminishes the means allowed for their improvement, inflicts upon them necessarily inferior instruction, deprives them of indispensable equipments and facilities, lowers them in public estimation, and often makes them worthless and so actually deprives the children of the poor and feeble of the right, through a proper and sufficient culture, of thoroughly qualifying themselves for discharging honorably and usefully the duties of republican citizenship. And the various excuses under cover of which this course is taken, often serve to expose more clearly its impropriety, the shallowness of the reasoning on which it is made to rest, and oftentimes its cowardice and baseness.

It is often said that profanity, obscenity, vulgarity and rudeness prevail in the common school, and men of culture and moral standing say: "the public school is so mean and degraded that I cannot send

"my children there." In reply it may be stated first that private schools are not by any means free from the faults and vices thus enumerated, and that the public schools, as a whole, will compare favorably even in these particulars with the private schools in the State.

Secondly it may be said that if the public school is unfit for the child of the minister, the lawyer, or the man of wealth and position and of high culture; it is most manifestly unfit for the child of the poorest man in the community, whose only chance for elevation from the depth of his poverty rests in the intelligence and character which he may derive from the public school. And thirdly it may be said that if the allegation be true, it convicts those making it of failure to do their plain duty in regard to the schools. If the public schools are in fact as degraded as they are thus represented, what is to be done? It is the manifest duty of all good citizens rather to energetically attempt a reformation in them, than to allow them to remain in such low condition or sink lower. And this as well as all other desirable reformations should be urged on by the exertions of the intelligent and influential; and they, having really the power to work a change in them are false to a sacred duty and trust, if they allow an unnecessary degradation of the schools to blast the prospects for moral and intellectual culture of a large portion of the community without an effort in their behalf. And such men can in no way so effectually improve the schools as to send their children into them; for if their children are not intelligent and virtuous, they certainly will not be injured, and will at least attract to the common school the interest of their parents; and if they are, will by their example improve directly the character of the schools.

It is useless to go by like the priest and the Levite, "on the other side," and standing afar off to rail at and rebuke the faults that may be perceptible. Such a course never reforms a community or a school. We must, if they are low, go down to and actually take hold of them. As has been well said: "the lawyer does not refuse to assist his clients because they are in trouble, nor the doctor his patient because he is sick, nor the minister his people because they are ignorant or afflicted;" and it may be added that he would hardly be deemed a model missionary who should desert his field of labor because the character of its people was so low and degraded.

It is sometimes said that there are "so many foreigners" in the common school, that on that account their influence is evil. To this every practical teacher will readily reply and with truth, that it is true that vice and degradation being of no nation or sex exclusively, there may be low and vicious children of foreigners in the public school; but for the perfection of coarseness, profanity and obstinate willfulness, the world may be challenged to excel a native Yankee made obtuse and wicked by bad example and discipline at home, and sent to school from entire lack of power to control him elsewhere.

And it is said that in the public school there will be an enforced association with the children of the poor and the vicious, as though there

were some natural connection between poverty and vice; when in fact the best children of any school are as likely to be found among those of least means as among the prosperous, and the most perverted and vicious of most schools are often and indeed generally the spoiled children of men whose wealth often thus proves a curse to their children. But even supposing that there is danger of exposure to evil influences in the public school, so there is in the private school. And in either case it is to be remembered that such exposure must and will come sooner or later. If children are, as it were, sequestered, separated from all contact with average children in childhood, they will of necessity grow up in ignorance of the character of the great mass, with whom at some time they must mingle, and who being the mass, under the rule of majorities at some future and not distant period must control, and over whom the children thus sequestered, by that very seclusion are deprived of all influence. If a child at an early age hears profanity or vulgarity it is apt to tell its parent and will be in the way of admonition and correction, which being applicable to a case actually occurring, will be more efficacious than any general and abstract teaching or preaching can be. But if secluded till a more mature age, the child is likely to conceal any exposure to common vices, and thus without warning or instruction is more in danger of forming or imitating bad habits. Little wisdom appears in simply guarding children from present danger without exercising any care for the future. It would be better to purify all the schools, and thus all the growing elements that will go to make up the future society with which the child perforce must mix. It is better to correct the atmosphere that now and hereafter our children must breathe, than merely for the present to take them out of the atmosphere, leaving all noxious vapors to increase in strength and become constant elements of mischief. The withdrawal of children from the school assists in the debasement of the mass, who continue to go lower and lower until corrupted, when the children formerly secluded must return again to mingle with the mass thus corrupted.

The children of the more prosperous thus taken from the common school and confined to the exclusive society of a few others similarly situated, are often themselves unfavorably affected thereby. Their very seclusion gives them false notions of pride and exclusiveness, they are puffed up with self conceit, and begin to look down upon and contemn those whom they are practically taught to consider as beneath them, and by such a course their young hearts are hardened and a feeling of brotherly and kindly equality becomes almost impossible. In this way the natural tendency of prosperity to foster the division of society into classes is intensified, and the distinctions of rich and poor, high and low, patrician and plebian, which should be unknown under the institutions of this country, are very readily perceived and received by children who have grown up in the idea that they were too good to be educated in the same school with

others, and they become haughty and take on airs and strut, and easily and naturally acquire foolish and unjust notions that will by the future men whom they have thus despised, be remembered and resented when a common release from school shall place them upon the common platform of manhood.

If the sequestration, begun in childhood, could continue, as under aristocratic governments, the case would be different, but here the very children sequestered and thereby rendered effeminate, on arriving at the threshold of active life, are to contend for success not alone with others similarly weakened and affected with foolish predilections for an impossible aristocracy and exclusiveness; but they are to contend hand to hand and eye to eye with men made muscular and hardy at the public school, who will take a pure pleasure in mortifying the pride and bringing down the conceit of those who were too good to mingle with them in the studies and sports of boyhood.

Of the third class who send their children to the select school because their more prosperous neighbors do the same, the mere mention is sufficient. Such a course can only be induced by a sort of snobbish toadyism, which should receive the hearty contempt of every man of capacity enough to understand and heart to appreciate the truly democratic nature of our free institutions.

From what has already been said it will appear that no one measure could so powerfully affect the educational welfare of our State as the general adoption of graded schools. Wherever the necessary consolidation of districts can be effected, the graded schools would stand in the place of the local academy, and easily and fully perform its educational labor; and wherever such consolidation is impracticable, still the gradation of schools to whatever extent it could be introduced, would very much enlarge the scope of common school instruction and add to its power. Changes, and those of importance, would undoubtedly result. The number of academies would be diminished. Select and private schools would gradually disappear. But district schools would be vastly improved, and the various benefits which they would impart would more than compensate for any evils that might be anticipated from any changes that could occur. The common schools would receive better instruction and more efficient discipline, they would have better facilities for accomplishing their work, a larger attendance of pupils, and a much wider range of studies. They would necessarily rise higher in the estimation of all and would be surrounded with a warmer sympathy, and sustained with a greater energy and power.

The diminution of the number of academies would, by the gradual substitution of graded schools, be accomplished without violence and would cause no sudden shock. Academic teachers who were competent would be gladly received into the graded schools, and opportunity and leisure for improvement would be given to those who were not. The academies that remained would confine themselves more and

more to their own appropriate work, and would, being well attended and well sustained, become proportionally more and more efficient.

As we survey the educational field at the present time, and note the discordance and jostling between the various elements, that if working harmoniously together would constitute a complete educational system, extending from the elementary school to the college, we are almost inclined to believe that they exist by accident, and not in accordance with any certain plan or design. But if we look through recent legislation, back to the time when the educational legislation of our State began, we shall see that the founders and fathers of the State, originally had a well-defined plan, which they supposed sufficient for the complete education of the youth of the commonwealth. They required common schools sufficient for the education of all the children to a certain extent to be sustained in every town. They made provision for a Grammar school in each County, from time to time granting aid from the State for their endowment. And that their work might be complete, they established a State University.

And had that original plan never been changed or interfered with, every child in the State at the present time would enjoy better opportunities for thorough culture than are now given by all the various schools, public and private, academies and colleges in the State.

But the unity and harmonious action of the original plan of the fathers, has been sadly interfered with and almost destroyed, sometimes by the disastrous effects of legislation, and still more often by the results of the careless action of towns, communities and individuals.

The apathy and carelessness of individuals and communities, allowed the public schools to become degraded in character, and so increased the natural tendency to desert the common schools and depend upon select and private schools and academies for the instruction of children in studies legitimately belonging to and required by law to be taught in the public schools.

Then, by legislation of a comparatively recent date, the power and efficiency of the Grammar schools originally supposed to be sufficient for all requisite academic instruction, and in point of fact adequate thereto, were seriously impaired by continually recurring division and sub-division of the State fund established for their support.

By the careless action of towns, they being invested with the supreme control of the boundaries of school districts, a constant tendency to the division and sub-division of school districts with cause and without cause, has existed, which has frittered away the real strength of the school district organization and very much diminished the efficiency of the schools.

And the interests of a higher education have also been similarly and injuriously influenced by the establishment of subsequent and rival collegiate institutions.

I am well aware of the delicacy and difficulty, and, indeed, the danger of venturing even to touch the subject to which I have last alluded; but knowing the intimate connection and relation subsisting between the various grades of the educational institutions of the State, and how absolutely the welfare of each particular grade is dependent upon the success of each and all of the other grades; I cannot, although my official position connects me more particularly with the public schools, and perhaps in the view of many, exclusively so, refrain from calling attention to some of the evil consequences resulting from what now appears to have been an unnecessary and unwise multiplication of colleges.

Recent events in the history of our country by exhibiting the advantages which have inured to the managers of the existing rebellion from the large supply of men who have received a military education from the great number of military schools and colleges that have flourished within the bounds of the seceding States, have so far revolutionized the public sentiment of our State in regard to the expediency and necessity, through the establishment of institutions expressly devoted thereto, of providing for the requisite military education of our people, as to have secured in a measure the permanent prosperity of the military school established at Norwich, in our State.

And therefore in what follows special reference is made to the existence in the immediate vicinity of each other of the colleges at Burlington and Middlebury as co-ordinate, and under the circumstances, almost necessarily rival institutions.

None can appreciate more highly than I do the vast amount of good for the race and the world, that has been effected through the instrumentality of these two institutions. The thousands of noble men who have graduated from their halls, and through the inspiration there received have gone forth into every part of our country with heart and hand and voice ready for every good work and word, are themselves the best witnesses both of the efficiency of the instruction they had received and of the persistent zeal and self-sacrificing devotion with which these two institutions have been fostered and cherished by the comparatively few generous and liberal men upon whom their support has mainly devolved.

But however great may be the measure of good which has been accomplished by the *two* institution, it may well be doubted whether a still larger amount might not have been effected by either one of them in the same time, if the other had never existed.

Admitting the superior excellence of both of these colleges, and attributing to neither any superiority over the other, it is demonstrable both from reason and by facts, that the collegiate interests of our State have suffered from their very co-existence.

The existence of both of these institutions has been one continued contest with pecuniary embarrassment.

Located as both of them are in the midst of a population of more

ıan common intelligence, and capable of estimating, and in fact ightly appreciating the value of higher culture, and in a State the conomy of whose civil government and the general prosperity of hose citizens give it ample ability to make munificent endowments or literary purposes if it were so inclined, these two institutions claim- ıg and receiving a comparatively high character for literary excel- ence have struggled along side by side year after year, in a never nding effort to prolong existence by constant appeals at one time to he local pride and liberality of citizens of our own State, and at nother to the generosity of friends of education resident elsewhere.

And during all this time more native Vermonters have graduated om Dartmouth and Cambridge, and Amherst, and Williams, and ale, and Union, than from both these institutions together.

The literary strength and the pecuniary and numerical weakness f these two colleges, have for many years fastened the attention and wakened the serious consideration of friends of education through- ut the State; and from personal intercourse with many of the wisest iends of higher culture throughout our State, I well know that or several years a conviction has been gaining strength continually, f the necessity of a return to the original educational policy of the tate by a consolidation of the University of Vermont and Middle- ury College.

If this by any means could be accomplished a decided change for he better in various respects would immediately follow.

1st. The single institution that would result from such consolida- ion would become an object of State pride and concentre upon itself general interest of much wider and more uniform prevalence and f far greater intensity than has ever been granted to the existing olleges.

2d. Being the sole institution of a higher character in the State, nd having gathered about it a more general and intense interest, it ould afford an opportunity for the exercise of legislative patronage, hich has been hitherto prevented by the existence of a local preju- ice and partisan hostility which has induced liberal minded legisla- ors rather to deny all legislative aid for educational purposes than o grant to either of two institutions pecuniary assistance which ould not be well claimed or expected for both.

Legislative aid would be claimed, and it would be granted, and efore the lapse of many years a single literary instution would re- eive endowments that would plant it upon a firm and substantial ecuniary basis, and thus with increasing independence it would ex- rt a wider and stronger influence for good.

3d. The fountains of private and individual munificence which ave been closed to a great extent by the indisposition to choose be- ween two institutions of equal excellence by granting to either ecuniary assistance which could not be granted to both, and the estowal of which upon either would excite the jealousy and hostility

of the other; these fountains would be opened and liberal minded men of opulence and generosity by ample contribution of their means to the endowment of the one State University, would here, as in other States has been done, connect their names with the history of high mental and moral culture.

4th. Thus gathering strength and power from various sources and thereby becoming more efficient and more worthy of support, the one State University would attract to itself hundreds of young men who in the absence of any especial predilection for either of two rival colleges now seek in colleges of other States a culture no better than would be given here.

I have felt constrained from a sense of duty to introduce this matter in the present report for various, and as I think sufficient reasons.

1st. As I have stated, I personally know, that much of anxious thought has been given to this matter of the consolidation of these institutions by many earnest friends and graduates of both institutions in all parts of the State, who have expressed to me a desire that the subject should in some way be brought prominently before the public mind.

2nd. Under existing circumstances in our State, the consolidation of these two colleges almost necessarily involves the selection of either Middlebury or Burlington, as the site of the institution resulting from such consolidation.

And the recent acceptation by this State of the Congressional grant of lands for the establishment of an Agricultural College, seems to afford a better opportunity than may ever occur again to make compensation in some degree for the loss which may result by the non-selection of either of these two towns as the site for the location of the consolidated college, by tendering to it, its selection as a site for the establishment of the proposed Agricultural College, perhaps in connection with that of a State Normal school.

3rd. The suggestion of this matter seemed indispensibly necessary to the completion of the discussion of the importance of a more general adoption of graded schools.

The necessity for general intelligence and virtue is the impregnable basis upon which every system of State educational institutions rests.

But if such necessity be admitted, and intelligence to even a slight degree be indispensable to the prosperity of the State, who shall say when and where the necessity for further culture ceases, or precisely to what extent it is expedient and desirable that the culture provided by the State through the establishment of educational institutions, shall proceed.

The same inexorable logic which fully vindicates both the prosperity and necessity of the establishment and support of a common school of the lowest grade, to be supported by a general taxation, is amply sufficient to warrant by the same reasoning the indefinite exten-

sion of the scope and reach of the culture that may and of right ought to be thus freely given by every republican commonwealth to each and all of its children irrespective of their circumstances or social condition

The educational institutions of the city of New York furnish the most beautiful exemplification of the beneficent operation of liberalized and christianized republican institutions that ever existed. There through its Ward schools, its Grammar schools, and its noble *Free Academy*, all supported by general taxation, and all equally open to every child of every class and every condition, the son of the millionaire and the son of the washerwoman, side by side and hand in hand, without any distinction except such as may arise from a difference of merit, may and do proceed from the primary school, through all the various intervening grades, finally to step from the portals of the Free Academy, having there received every advantage afforded by the highest collegiate institutions in the land, fully prepared mentally and morally to act well their part in the great drama of life, by the faithful discharge of all the difficult duties of American citizenship.

A consideration of the policy of a more general adoption of graded schools, has naturally and almost necessarily led to a discussion of the expediency and desirability of a solidification of the higher educational interests of the State. Could these two measures be accomplished, and all her educational institutions be placed upon the same basis, the unity and beauty of the original design for the thorough education of the people of the State would be restored, and our noble State would have a complete educational system, whose rod of power by smiting the rocky obstacles that impede and obstruct the upward march of the coming generations, should unseal the very fountains of knowledge and proffer a participation in the healing and purifying influences of their flowing waters, without money and without price, to every son of woman, regardless of his condition or circumstances, who might truly thirst therefor.

Respectfully submitted,

J. S. ADAMS, *Secretary.*

# MODIFICATIONS OF LAW RECOMMENDED.

I recommend to your Hon. Board that an effort be made to procure the following modifications of existing laws:—

1st. A restoration of the clause by which, in the pre-existing law, it was provided that the Prudential Committee of Union Districts "shall have all the powers and discharge all the duties in relation to "said school, and the school house of said district, as are prescribed "to other Prudential Committees in relation to the school and school "houses in their respective districts."

2nd. A restoration of the provisions of previous law, in regard to making a list of the children resident in each district, on the first of January.

3d. A restoration of the provision of previous law, by which an amount not exceeding thirty dollars, was appropriated for assistance in each of the Teachers' Institutes.

4th. The enactment of law by means of which the Town Superintendent of schools, on revoking the certificate of a teacher, shall be required to file in the town clerk's office a written statement of the reasons for such revocation.

5th. The enactment of law by which district clerks may charge to their districts a reasonable sum for their labor in the procurement of statistics pursuant to law.

6th. The enactment of law by which it shall be made unlawful to pay any compensation to a teacher for his services as such, who fails to keep the records required by law to be kept in the school register of his school.

7th. The enactment of law by which power shall be given to towns, so electing to do, to abolish all district organizations within their bounds, take possession of and account for all district property, pay all district debts, and in their municipal capacity assume all ordinary functions and perform all ordinary duties of districts.

J. S. ADAMS, *Secretary.*

# APPENDIX.

## COMMON SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL LAWS.

BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SECRETARY.


SECTION

1. Appointment of board.
2. Annual Meeting.
3. Appointment of a secretary, and his duties.
4. The board to recommend to legislature alterations in existing school laws.
5. Vacancies to be filled.
6. Compensation of members of the board.
7. Board of education to select a list of school-books to be used in district schools, to become authoritative until Jan. 1. 1867.—Such books to be recommended for use in district schools.
8. Preparation and distribution of the annual report of secretary of board of education.

TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS.

9. Superintendent of common schools in each town ; election and compensation ; and how allowed.
10. Their duties.
11. Teachers shall possess moral character and requisite qualifications, and are required to obtain certificate from superintendent.
12. Certificates of qualifications of town superintendents of common schools. for teaching, how obtained.
13. Superintendents to give notice of time of examination of teachers.
14. Examination of teachers by town superintendents.
15. List of teachers. and dates of their certificates, to be lodged in town clerk's office.
16. Power of superintendent to revoke certificate of teachers in certain cases. Proceedings in such cases.
17. Vacancy in office of superintendent. how supplied.

SECTION

18. Time, not exceeding two days, spent by teacher in attendance upon teachers' institute held in the county, to be considered as expended in performance of his contract as teacher.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

19. Each town to keep one or more schools.—Subjects of instruction.
20. Towns to be divided into school districts.
21. Districts to be numbered, &c.
22. Mode of organizing districts in towns.
23. Mode in unorganized towns or gores.
24. Mode of forming and organizing districts from two or more adjoining towns.
25. Provisions for visitation, &c., of districts in more than one town.
26. Provision for returns from districts in more than one town.
27. Inhabitants of one town may be set to a district in another.
28. Where taxed in such cases.
29. Districts to have powers of a corporation.—Voters therein.
30. Powers of school districts to provide schools in certain cases.
31. May hold estates, prosecute suits, &c.
32. Officers of district chosen annually. Time of annual meeting.—Duty of treasurer.
33. School district may elect the first constable their collector.
34. When moderator *pro tem.* may be chosen.
35. Vacancies ; how supplied.
36. If clerk absent or disabled, prudential committee to discharge duties of office.
37. Clerk of school district to keep records of the votes of meetings.

SECTION

38. The school year to commence first day of April.
39. Powers and duties of prudential committee.
40. Provision for providing district schools in certain cases.—Offices vacated by neglect.—Such vacancies filled by selectmen.—Duty of prudential committee so appointed to sustain a school.
41, 42. Meetings; how appointed and notified.
43. Districts may raise tax to build school-house, &c.
44. Districts may locate school-house. On application, selectmen may locate.
45. Real estate to be taxed where located.
46. Persons unable to pay may be omitted in tax-bill in certain cases.
47. Prudential committee to assess tax. make rate-bill, &c.
48. Tax-bills and public moneys payable to the treasurer.—Orders to be drawn on treasurer.
49. Power and duty of collector.
50. Taxes to be laid on grand list. except for expenses of fuel and teachers' board, which may be apportioned to the scholar.
51. Powers of committee to enforce collection of taxes.
52. Taxes may be remitted at legal meeting, &c.
53. Districts formed from two or more towns; how dissolved.
54. Powers and duties of justices.
55. Each part, after separation, to be a district.
56. Districts formed under former laws to retain their powers.
57. Penalty on clerk for neglect in making returns.
58. Penalty for neglect to notify meetings.
59. Penalty on superintendents for paying teachers not having obtained their certificate of qualification.
60. Contracts for teaching invalid, unless teacher obtain certificate.

HIGH, OR CENTRAL, OR GRADED SCHOOLS.

61. Prudential committee may call a school-meeting when, in their opinion, more than one teacher is required.

SECTION

62. Meeting may vote to have more than one school, and to erect school houses.
63. Meeting may direct the sciences or higher branches of a thorough education to be taught.
64. Committee may direct what school scholars shall attend.
65. Children not residing in district shall not be permitted to attend the higher school, except with consent of committee.

UNION DISTRICTS.

66. Union of school districts authorized.
67. Provision for distributing public money to union school districts.
68. Such districts to have corporate powers.
69. First meeting; how called.
70. Clerk to be appointed.
71. Time of holding the annual union school district meetings.
72. Money; how raised.—Locating school-houses.
73. Prudential committee of union districts; how constituted.
74. Duties of the committee. — The schools in each district to be continued.—Union schools entitled to share of public money.—Proviso.
75. Union districts to choose moderator, collector, and treasurer; may raise money, &c.
76. A district may withdraw from such union district in case two thirds of such district vote in favor of it.
77. A contiguous school district may be united to a union district if two thirds of the voters of such districts, present at the meeting, vote in favor of such union.

TOWN SCHOOL FUND.

78. Selectmen to have charge of estate for use of schools.
79. Securities and moneys belonging to school fund to be kept in town treasury.
80. Selectmen annually to assess nine per cent. tax for schools.
81. Tax omitted, in whole or in part, in certain cases.
82. Towns may vote other taxes, and nine per cent tax be omitted.
83, 84. Mode of division of public money among school districts.—No district to receive any of such

SECTION
money except on certain conditions.
85. Statement of amount divided to each district to be left with town clerk.
86. When district formed from two or more towns; how money divided.
87. Penalty for not assessing state school tax.
88. How penalty to be appropriated.
89. Grand-jury to indict towns for neglect in assessing, collecting, and expending tax.
90. Penalty for embezzling school funds.

UNITED STATES DEPOSIT MONEY.

91. Treasurer to receive moneys belonging to the United States to be deposited, and give certificate, &c.
92. Moneys deposited divided among towns according to census of 1860.—Provision for unorganized towns and gores.
93. On a new census; new apportionment to be made.
94. On a new apportionment; treasurer to collect excess and pay over.—Deficiencies of towns made up.
95. Each town to elect trustees.
96. If towns neglect to choose trustees, treasurer to put shares on interest.
97. Trustees to give bonds.
98. Office to be considered vacant if bonds are not given.
99. Treasurer to pay moneys to trustees and take receipt.
100 Towns in such cases accountable.
101. Trustees to loan money.
102. Loans not to be over one year.
103. Trustees may loan to the town.
104. Income of deposit money appropriated to schools.
105. When trustees to pay income to town treasurer.
106. Not to be appropriated to schools in case, &c.
107. Penalty on towns for neglect, &c.
108. Grand-jury to inquire and indict towns, &c.

SECTION.

STATISTICS.

109. Secretary of board of education to prescribe forms for school-register: to furnish them to town clerk;—town clerk to forward receipt therefor to secretary; and on failure to receive such registers by first of February, to notify secretary thereof.—District clerk to procure register of town clerk.
110. Duties of school-teacher and district clerk relative to school register.—No portion of public money to be distributed to any district whose register is not properly filled out and filed.
111. Town clerk to prepare abstract of returns, &c.
112. Returns of the town superintendents to the secretary of board; when to be made, &c.
113. Trustees of academies and grammar-schools to make statistical returns to the secretary of the board.

SCHOOL-HOUSES AND YARDS.

114. School-house, how located.—Land for sites and yards, how obtained, and by what proceedings, may be enlarged, &c.
115. Lands not to be entered upon until damages paid.
116. Question of damages may be referred.
117. Owner of land dissatisfied with location, may apply to county court to appoint commissioners, &c.
118. Proceedings of commissioners, and decision.
119. Opening of land stayed; court may fix time of opening, and may award execution.
120. If lands are mortaged, damages to be paid mortgagee.

# THE SCHOOL LAW OF VERMONT,

## AS REVISED BY THE LEGISLATURE AT THEIR OCTOBER SESSION A. D. 1862.

---

SECTION 1. The Governor shall annually nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, shall appoint a board of education consisting of three persons, and the governor and lieutenant Governor of this State shall, for the time being, be ex-officio members thereof.

SEC. 2. Said Board shall hold an annual meeting in Montpelier, commencing on Tuesday of the second week of the session of the Legislature, and one special meeting during the recess of the Legislature, and in the discretion of the Governor the time and place of holding such special meeting shall be designated by the Governor.

SEC. 3. At the annual meeting said Board shall appoint a suitable and competent person to be Secretary of said Board of Education, whose duties shall be: first, to keep a record of all the official doings of said board; second, to exert himself constantly and faithfully to promote the highest interests of Education in the State, by and with the advice of the Board of Education; and to this end he shall hold annually, in connection with the Academies and Seminaries of the State, at least one Teachers' Institute in each county in the State and not more than two in any one county, and said institutes shall be holden at as central a point, in the several counties, as is practicable, during the fall and spring terms, of such schools. He shall during each year visit every part of the State, deliver lectures upon subjects pertaining to the interest of education, confer with Town Superintendents, and visit schools in connection with them, and furnish and distribute to them blank forms for collecting statistics of the various schools in the State. He shall prepare and present to the Board of Education, on the first day of their annual session, a report of his official doings, for the preceding year, and a statement of the condition of the common schools of the State; of the expenditure of the school moneys therein; and such suggestions for improving their organization and modes of instruction,

together with such other information in regard to systems of school instruction in other states and countries, as he shall deem proper.

SEC. 4. Said Board of Education shall, from time to time, as they shall judge proper, recommend to the Legislature such alterations, revisions or amendments of existing laws, relating to common schools and seminaries of learning, as in their judgment are demanded in order to the perfecting of a system of general education in the State, and they shall annually when required by a resolution of the House of representatives so to do, make a report of their official doings, and of the state and condition of the schools in the state, to the Legislature.

SEC. 5. Said Board may at any time fill a vacancy in the board or office of Secretary.

SEC. 6. The compensation to the members of said board, and the Secretary thereof, for their services, shall be as follows :

To each member of the Board for each day's necessary attendance on the meetings of the same, the sum of three dollars, and the same mileage as is now provided by law for members of the legislature ; to the Secretary the sum of one thousand dollars per year, and the expenses of procuring blank forms and postage ; all of which allowances shall be paid by the Treasurer of the State, on the certificate of the Governor.

SEC. 7. The list of Grammars, Geographies, Arithmetics, Readers and Spellers, which has been caused to be selected by the Board of Education under the act of the Legislature approved Nov. 23, 1858, to be used in the districts schools in this State, with such limitations of text books in each of said branches, as the said Board has seen fit to prescribe under said act ; such selection having been made prior to the first day of January, 1859, and having been published in all the newspapers in the state in the month of January, 1859, and also inserted in each School Register ; shall be and remain authoritative and binding upon the Board of Education, superintendents and teachers, until January first A. D. 1867, and Teachers and Superintendents shall recommend for use in the district schools, as new books shall become necessary for instruction in the branches named, no other than books included in said list so established.

SEC. 8. The Secretary of the Board of Education shall annually prepare and print three thousand five hundred copies of his annual report, and have the same ready for distribution on the assembling of the Legislature in each year, and shall distribute the same as follows : one copy to each

Town Superintendent ; one copy to each district clerk ; and one copy to each principal of a high school, union school or academy in the State ; the necessary copies for all except the members of the legislature, to be forwarded by the Secretary to the various town clerks, and be by them distributed in the same manner in which the laws are distributed.

## TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS.

SEC. 9. The several Towns in this State shall, at their annual March meeting, elect one person to be Superintendent of Common Schools within such Town, who shall hold his office during the school year commencing on the first day of April next after his election, and when appointed by the Selectmen, during the remainder of the then current school year ; who shall receive for his services one dollar for each day necessarily spent in the discharge of his legal duties, and a reasonable sum for his annual report to the March meeting ; and every superintendent of schools shall make out in detail his account for official services, stating the date and time spent, as well as the kind of service rendered, and the number of districts in which a school has been taught the year preceding, and make oath or affirmation to the correctness of the same, before some Justice of the Peace in the town in which he resides, which oath or affirmation shall be certified by said Justice before such superintendent's account shall be presented to the Auditor of Accounts for allowance, who shall audit and allow the same, or so much thereof as is just and reasonable, and the same shall be paid out of the state treasury upon the order of the Auditor of accounts ; who is empowered to draw orders for the same ; but no order shall be drawn to any Superintendent until he shall have filed, with the Auditor of Accounts, the receipt of the Secretary of the Board of Education for the statistical returns of the preceding school year, in pursuance of the requirements of law ; but no Superintendent shall receive compensation while visiting schools for a number of days greater than twice the number of districts in the town for which he acts as superintendent.

SEC. 10. It shall be the duty of the Town Superintendent to visit all such common schools within their respective towns as shall be organized according to law, at least once in each year, and oftener if they shall deem it necessary. At such visitation, the Superintendents shall examine into the state and condition of such schools, as respects the progress of the school in learning and the order and government of the schools ; and they may give advice to the Teacher of such schools as to the government thereof, and course of

udy to be pursued therein, and shall adopt all requisite easures for the inspection, examination, and regulation of ie schools, and for the improvement of the scholars in arning. Every Superintendent of common schools shall lso make out his account for official services in the manner ereinbefore required, and deliver (a copy of) the same to ie Town Clerk of the town in which such Superintendent as elected or appointed on or before the day previous to ie annual town meeting next after the election or appointent of such Superintendent, and the same shall be filed and ept in the office of the town clerk.

SEC. 11. The Town Superintendents shall require full and 20 Vt. 495.
atisfactory evidence of the good moral character of all instructors who may be employed in the public schools, in ieir respective towns, and shall ascertain by personal examination, their qualifications and capacity for the instruction and government of schools and every instructor of a istrict school shall obtain of the Town Superintendent of uch town, a certificate of his qualifications, before he opens uch school, which certificate shall be available for one year nly.

SEC. 12. Whenever any superintendent of common schools n any town desires a certificate of his qualifications for eaching a district school in the town where he resides, he ay make application for the same to the superintendent of schools of any adjoining town, who shall examine uch applicant in relation to his qualifications therefor, and found satisfactory may give his certificate to said applicant in due form of law, which certificate shall be valid for ne year from the date thereof, in the town where said aplicant resides.

SEC. 13. The town superintendents shall give public notice of suitable times and places, that they will attend to the xamination of teachers, before commencement of the winer and summer schools.

SEC. 14. The examination of teachers by town superinendents shall be public, and held in some public place, after ue notice given pursuant to law, in the months of April or lay and November in each year, and citizens generally inited to attend; and no examination of teachers shall be eld at any other time or in any other manner except in the iscretion of the superintendents, and for the accommodation f teachers prevented by sickness or other unavoidable cirumstances from attending at the regular public examinaion, and any superintendent examining teachers at any ther time than the regular public examination, shall be enitled to receive from each teacher applying for such examnation the sum of fifty cents.

SEC. 15.—It shall be the duty of town superintendents of common schools to make out and lodge in the town clerk's office in their respective towns, annually, on or before the first day of February, a list of the names of all the teachers to whom they have granted certificates during the preceding year, together with the respective dates of the certificates.

SEC. 16.—Whenever, upon personal examination of schools, the superintendent of any town shall become satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that a teacher to whom a certificate has been granted, is incompetent to teach or govern his school properly, or setting an evil example before his school, the superintendent is hereby empowered in his discretion to revoke the certificate theretofore granted to such teacher, by filing in the town clerk's office of such town a statement in writing of having made such revocation, and delivering a copy thereof to the prudential committee and also to the teacher whose certificate is so revoked; and every teacher's certificate that shall have been duly revoked pursuant to the provisions of this section, shall immediately, upon the filing of such revocation, become thereafter null and void and of no effect, and such teacher's contract with the school district shall become void therefrom, and it shall not be lawful for the prudential committee to pay such teacher for any services thereafter performed as teacher, unless by a vote of the district.

SEC. 17. When from any cause, a vacancy shall occur in the office of town superintendent of common schools in any town the selectmen shall supply such vacancy until a new election shall be made, and the superintendent so appointed by the selectmen, shall have all the powers and be subject to all the duties and requirements of superintendents elected by the town.

SEC. 18. The time, not to exceed two days, actually spent by any teacher of a common school in attendance upon the teachers' institute, held pursuant to law, in the county in which such teacher shall be employed, during the time for which such teacher is engaged to teach such school, shall be considered as time lawfully expended by such teacher in the service of the district by which he is employed, and in the legitimate performance of his contract as teacher.

## SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

SEC. 19. Each organized town in the State shall keep and support one or more schools, provided with competent teachers, of good morals, for the instruction of the young in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and good behavior and special instruction shall be given in the

32 Vt. 224.

Geography and History, constitution and principles of government of the state of Vermont.

SEC. 20.—When the inhabitants of any town cannot be conveniently accommodated in one school district, it shall be the duty of such town, at a legal meeting, notified for that purpose, to divide such town into as many school districts as shall be judged most convenient; to define and determine their limits, and, from time to time, to divide such as are too large, unite such as are too small or otherwise to alter them, and make new districts, as shall be found expedient. 8 Vt. 402. 10 Vt. 480. 23 Vt. 626. 25 Vt. 311.

SEC. 21. The districts so formed shall be numbered, in a regular series, from number one upwards, and shall be known and designated by the name of their respective numbers; and their numbers and description, and all alterations made therein, from time to time, shall be recorded in the office of the town clerk.

SEC. 22. When it is necessary to organize any school district in any town, any three or more of the voters in such district may make application in writing to the selectmen of such town, and it shall be the duty of the selectmen to give notice for a meeting in such district, by posting up a notification thereof, specifying the time and place appointed, and the business of the meeting, in one or more of the most public places in such district, at least seven days before the time therein specified; and it shall be the duty of one of the selectmen to preside in the meeting until a moderator and clerk shall be chosen; after which, the district shall be deemed to be legally organized. 11 Vt. 607.

SEC. 23. The selectmen of any organized town, on the application of three or more voters, in an adjoining unorganized town, or gore, may organize school districts, in such unorganized town or gore, in the manner provided in the preceding section of this chapter, and if more than one district is needed, such selectmen may divide such unorganized town, or gore, into as many districts as may be required and may define and determine their limits and number them as provided in sections twenty and twenty-one of this chapter; and the selectmen shall be paid a reasonable compensation for their services by the petitioners.

SEC 24. When any number of inhabitants of two or more adjoining towns shall find it necessary or convenient to be formed into one district, for the purpose of supporting a school, such towns, by a concurrent vote for that purpose, may form the territory occupied by such inhabitants, into a district; and the first meeting may be notified, and the district organized by the selectmen of either of the towns, on application in writing for that purpose, by three or more

voters ; and the meeting shall be notified, and the district organized, in the same manner as provided in the twenty-second section of this chapter ; and when organized, such districts shall have the same powers, and be subject to the same liabilities, as other districts.

SEC. 25. In case a district shall be formed of parts of two towns, it shall, for all purposes of visitation and returns, and for the examination of school teachers, as provided in the tenth and eleventh sections of this chapter, be taken and deemed to belong to the county and town in which the school house of such district shall be situated.

SEC. 26. In any school district formed of territories or inhabitants belonging to two or more towns, the clerk of said district shall hereafter make out his returns of the statistics of each portion of the district belonging to the several towns, and file them in the town clerk's office to which each part or portion of said district respectively belongs ; in which case the returns shall be made in all respects agreeably to the provisions of section one hundred and ten of this cha er.

SEC. 27. Any town, by vote in town meeting, may set 21 Vt. 401.
one or more persons, residing in such town, to a school district in an adjoining town, if such district shall, by vote, consent to receive such persons ; and any persons, so united to a school district in another town, shall have the same rights, and be subject to the same liabilities, as if they had resided in the same town.

SEC. 28. Whenever a person residing in a school district in one town, shall be set to a school district in an adjoining town, as provided in the preceding section of this chapter, his property and person shall be taxed, and the taxes thereon shall be collected within and for the use of the district to which he shall be set as aforesaid, in the same manner as said property and person would be taxable, and the taxes thereon collectable in the said district in the town wherein he resides, in case he had not been set to said other district in an adjoining town :

Provided, that said property and person shall be taxable as aforesaid only in the district to which said person shall be set as aforesaid.

SEC. 29. When a school district shall be organized, it shall have all the powers of a corporation, for the purpose of maintaining a school in such district ; and any man of the age of twenty-one years, who, at the time, shall reside, and be liable to pay taxes in such district, shall be a legal voter in the same.

SEC. 30. The several school districts in this state shall

have power at their annual meetings to designate the number of weeks during which the winter and summer schools shall be sustained in such districts, and appoint the time for the commencement of such schools. And in case the prudential committee of such districts shall refuse or neglect, for more than two weeks after the time thus appointed, to provide such schools, in compliance with such direction, such districts may, at any legal meeting warned for that purpose, declare the office of prudential committee in such district vacant; and thereupon such offices shall become legally vacant, and such districts may then proceed to fill such vacancy, by the election of a prudential committee, who shall thereafter be clothed with all the powers, and subject to all the duties and liabilities they would have been liable to if elected at the annual meeting of such districts.

SEC. 31. The several school districts shall be authorized to take and hold any estate, real or personal, conveyed to them for the purpose of supporting schools in such districts, and may take care of, dispose of, and appropriate the same for such purpose; and may commence and prosecute any action against any person for the non-performance of any contract made with them, or for any damage done to their property, and may be sued for the non-performance of any contract made by them.

SEC. 32. The officers of each school district shall be a moderator to preside in the meetings, a clerk, a collector of taxes, a treasurer, and a prudential committee, consisting of one or three voters in such district; all of which officers shall be elected at the annual school meeting, which shall be held on the last Tuesday of March of each year, and their term of office shall commence at the time of their election and continue until others are chosen; and it shall be the duty of the treasurer to make an annual report to the said district of the amount of money received by him, and the manner in which it has been disbursed. 11 Vt. 618. 20 Vt. 487. 23 Vt. 416. 32 Vt. 769.

SEC. 33. Any school district may elect the first constable in any town to be the collector of taxes in such district, if such constable shall choose to accept such office, notwithstanding such constable may not be an inhabitant of such district; and so elected and accepting, such constable shall have all the powers and be subject to all the duties which, by law, are vested in or imposed upon school district collectors.

SEC. 34. In case of the death, absence or disability of the moderator of a school district, at any meeting legally warned, a moderator *pro tempore* may be chosen to preside in said meeting.

SEC. 35. When, from any cause, a vacancy shall occur in the offices of clerk, collector of taxes, treasurer, or prudential committee of any school district in any town in this state, the selectmen shall supply such vacancy until a new election shall be made; and the officers so appointed shall have all the powers and be subject to all the duties, requirements, and liabilities as they would be if chosen by such school district. 11 Vt. 618. 26 Vt. 503.

SEC. 36. In the absence or disability of the clerk of any school district, it shall be the duty of the prudential committee of such district, to discharge the duties imposed on clerks of schools districts, in this chapter.

SEC. 37. It shall be the duty of the clerk of each school district in this state to keep a fair record of all the votes and proceedings of school meetings in their respective districts, and to certify the same when required.

SEC. 38. The school year for the purpose contemplated in this chapter, shall be taken as commencing on the first day of April in each year and ending on the last day of March following.

SEC. 39. It shall be the duty of the prudential committee to keep each school house in their district in good order, at the expense of the district; and in case there shall be no school house, to provide a suitable place for each school at the expense of the district; to see that fuel and furniture, and all appendages and things necessary for the advantage of the school, be provided; to appoint and agree with a teacher to instruct the school, and remove him when necessary; and adopt all requisite measures for the inspection, examination and regulation of the school, and for the improvement of the scholars in learning. 20 Vt. 487. 24 Vt. 528. 30 Vt. 155. 33 Vt. 77.

SEC. 40. If any school district shall, for the period of six months next after the time fixed by law for the annual school meeting, omit or neglect to cause a common school of some grade to be taught in such district, for at least two months, by means of such omission or neglect, all the offices of said district shall be vacated; and on the application of any two legal voters in said district, the selectmen of the town in which such district is located shall proceed to fill such vacancies as is provided for by law in the case of vacancies in such offices otherwise occurring; and it shall be the duty of the prudential committee to sustain a sufficient school in such district at least four months in each school year, at the expense of such district, and such committee shall have all the powers given by law to prudential committees duly elected in legal school meeting; and such committee is hereby further empowered, without

previous vote of such district, to assess a tax upon the grand list of such district for the amount necessary to sustain such school for the four months specified, and make out a rate-bill therefor, and proceed in all respects in the collection and disbursement thereof, as though directed so to do by a previous vote of a legal school meeting in such district.

SEC. 41. The meetings of a school district shall be appointed and notified by the clerk, on application to him in writing, by three or more legal voters of the district; and, in case of the absence or neglect of the clerk, one or more of the prudential committee shall appoint and notify such meetings on such application; and the meetings shall be notified by posting up notices in one or more of the most public places in the district, specifying the time, place and object of the meeting, at least seven and not more than twelve days before the time therein specified for the meetings; and every district clerk and prudential committee, who shall wilfully violate the provisions of this section, shall be subject to the penalty imposed in section fifty-eight of this chapter. 14 Vt. 300. 16 Vt. 439. 17 Vt. 337. 20 Vt. 487. 22 Vt. 309.

SEC. 42. The annual meeting of a school district may be appointed and notified by the clerk of said district without any application to him therefor by any of the voters of the district, and such annual meeting shall be notified in the manner provided by law for the notification of special school district meetings. And in case of the absence or neglect of the clerk, one or more of the prudential committee may appoint and notify such annual meeting as aforesaid, without any application to him therefor by any of the voters of the district.

SEC. 43. The several school districts may, by vote in a legal meeting, appointed and notified as required in the forty-first section of this chapter, raise money by a tax on the lists of the inhabitants of such districts, for the purpose of erecting or repairing a school house, or to purchase or hire a building to be used as a school house, and to purchase land for a school house to stand upon, and for yards, and for the necessary erection of out-buildings thereon, and for the accommodation of the same, and to support a school in such district as may be judged necessary or expedient 23 Vt. 416. 31 Vt. 337. 32 Vt. 769.

SEC. 44. Each district may also determine, by a vote of two-thirds of the legal voters present, in what place and in what part of the district the school house shall be located, and may choose a committee to superintend the building, repairing or purchasing of such school house, for procuring the necessary furniture and utensils for the same; and if the voters in any district cannot agree upon the location of the

school house, the selectmen of the same town, on application to them by the prudential committee, may fix upon the place for the school house in such district.

SEC. 45. When a tax bill shall be laid, or ordered by vote of any district, for the purpose mentioned in this chapter, all real estate shall be taxed in the district in which it is situated.

SEC. 46. At any meeting of any school district, legally warned, the legal voters in such district may instruct the prudential committee to omit, in making up the tax bill for the support of schools, the names of such persons as are not able to pay their proportion of such tax; two-thirds of the voters present assenting thereto.

SEC. 47. The prudential committee shall, as soon after the vote of the district for that purpose, as the circumstances of the case may require, assess a tax for the amount voted to be raised on the list of the inhabitants of such district and on lands in such district belonging to persons living out of it, and make out a rate bill of the same; and any justice of the same county shall, on application for that purpose, make out a warrant in due form of law, directed to the collector of such district, authorizing and requiring him to levy and collect such tax, within the time limited therein, and pay the same to the treasurer of such district. 31 Vt. 337. 32 Vt. 709.

SEC. 48. All school district tax bills shall be made payable to the treasurer; and the selectmen, upon making a division of the public school money, shall make the orders of the same payable to the treasurers in the several school districts, and the prudential committees of the several school districts shall draw orders for all sums due from said districts upon the respective treasurers thereof.

SEC. 49. When such tax bill and warrant shall be delivered to the collector, it shall be his duty to proceed in levying and collecting such tax in the same manner, and he shall have the same power, as provided by law for collectors in collecting town taxes; and shall, within the time limited, collect and pay the same to the treasurer, to be applied to the purposes authorized by the vote of the district.

SEC. 50. All moneys raised by school districts for the support of schools shall be raised upon the Grand List of said districts; provided that any school district may at a legally warned meeting vote to defray the expenses of fuel and teacher's board by apportioning the same to the scholars who shall attend the school, or by assessing a tax upon the same: but no tax shall be assessed on account of scholars who shall not attend the school, and said taxes shall be col-

lected in the same manner as other school district taxes are collected.

SEC. 51. The prudential committee of any school district shall have the same authority to enforce the collection and payment of the money voted and assessed by such district as the treasurer of the town, by law has, for enforcing the payment and collection of town taxes.

SEC. 52. The legal voters in any district, at a legal meeting warned for that purpose, may remit or make abatement on any tax bill made out for the collection of taxes assessed by such district, to an amount not exceeding five per cent. of the same, two-thirds of the voters, present at such meeting, agreeing thereto.

SEC. 53. When any school district shall have been formed from territory or inhabitants belonging to two or more towns, the inhabitants of such district, belonging to either town, may, if there shall be sufficient cause for it, procure their union with the other towns to be dissolved; and for that purpose, three or more of the legal voters may make application to a judge of the county court of the same county, whose duty it shall be to appoint three justices of the same county, not inhabitants of either town in interest, to inquire into the circumstances of the case.

SEC. 54. If, in the opinion of such justices, it shall be expedient to dissolve such district, they shall order the same to be dissolved, and shall make a certificate thereof and leave the same in the office of the town clerk of each town interested, to be recorded; and shall thereupon order a distribution of the property belonging to such district, to the inhabitants thereof residing in the several towns, and may order the payment of such damages by, or to, the inhabitants of either town, as shall be just and equitable.

SEC. 55. The inhabitants of each town, after the separation, shall be deemed a legal school district, and may become organized in the manner provided for the organization of other districts, and may, by vote, assume a corporate name, unless a corporate name shall otherwise have been given to it, and may receive, recover and take care of such damages or property, as may be awarded to it by the Justices.

SEC. 56. Any school district, heretofore organized according to previous laws, shall remain a legal school district, subject to the provisions of this chapter; and the officers which shall have been appointed, shall have the same power, perform the same duties, and be subject to the same liabilities, as are provided in this chapter.

SEC. 57. If any district clerk shall wilfully neglect to

make such return of the number of scholars in his district, as is required in this chapter, or shall knowingly and wilfully, make a false return, he shall forfeit and pay to the town, for the use of schools in such town, a sum equal to the amount of moneys, which his district would have been entitled to draw from the treasury of the town, during the year in which the offence shall be committed, to be recovered in an action in the name of the town, with costs.

SEC. 58. If any district clerk or prudential committee, whose duty it shall be to warn a meeting of any school district, for the purpose of choosing the necessary officers, or for other purposes, shall neglect or refuse to warn such meeting, for the space of ten days after application shall have been made to them in writing, by three or more legal voters belonging to such district, the person so offending shall forfeit and pay, for the use of the school in such district, twenty dollars for each delay of ten days, to be recovered in an action in the name of such district with costs.

SEC. 59. If any prudential committee, in any school district in this State, shall pay out of the moneys of said district to any teacher employed therein, who has not obtained a certificate of qualification from the town superintendent in the manner required by law, or in case there shall be no town superintendent in such town, from the superintendent of some other town in the same county, such committee shall be liable to such district for all such moneys so by him or them paid, to be recovered in an action on the case, prosecuted in the name of such district, and it is hereby made the duty of the Town Agent of the town, wherein such district is situated, to prosecute all such actions to effect at the expense of and in the name and for the benefit of such district.

SEC. 60. Any contract for teaching hereafter made, between the prudential committee of any school district, and any common school teacher, shall be null and void, if the said teacher shall have failed to obtain a certificate of qualification of the superintendent of the town in which such district shall be situated, as provided for in the eleventh section of this chapter, before the commencement of the school for which such contract shall have been made.

20 Vt. 495. 26 Vt. 115. 27 Vt. 281. 28 Vt. 575. 29 Vt. 433. 30 Vt. 586.

## HIGH, OR CENTRAL, OR GRADED SCHOOLS.

SEC. 61. When the children of any school district shall have become so numerous as, in the opinion of the prudential committee, to require more than one teacher, the clerk of such district shall, on application of such committee, call a meeting of such district, for the purpose of ascertaining the views of the district thereon.

SEC. 62. If, at such meeting, a majority of the legal voters shall vote to have two or more schools in the district at the same time, such district may vote to erect as many school houses in the district as shall be found necessary, and shall, by vote or in such other manner as the legal voters present may determine, fix on the location of such school house or houses.

SEC. 63. Any such district so composed of several schools may, by a vote of a majority of such district, at any meeting legally warned for that purpose, direct the teacher of the higher or central school of the district, to teach any of the sciences or higher branches of a thorough education, which may not, by existing laws, have been authorized.

SEC. 64. The prudential committee of such district, or a committee appointed for that purpose, shall have power to examine as to the age and qualifications of the children, and designate the school they shall each attend.

SEC. 65. Children not residing in such district shall not be permitted to attend the higher school of such district, except with the consent of the prudential committee, who may prescribe the terms upon which they may be admitted.

## UNION DISTRICTS.

SEC. 66. Any two or more contiguous school districts in this State may associate together and form a union district, for the purpose of maintaining a union school, to be kept for the benefit of the older children of such associated districts, if the inhabitants of each of such districts shall, at legal meetings called for that purpose, agree to form such union by a vote of two-thirds of the legal voters thereof, present at such meeting.

SEC. 67. The several union districts in this State, in the distribution of the public school money, by the several towns in which such union districts may be situated, as to that part which is to be distributed for attendance of scholars, shall be accounted as a common school district, and shall receive a proportionate share of the public school money, under the same regulations and conditions that are provided for common school districts. Provided, however, that nothing in this section shall be construed as affecting, in any way, the provisions of "an act to enlarge the powers of the Montpelier Union District," approved November 21, 1859.

SEC. 68. Every union district thus formed shall be a body corporate, with the corporate powers of other school districts, in relation to prosecuting and defending suits at law, and holding real and personal property; and shall be called

by such name as said district at its first meeting shall determine.

SEC. 69. The first meeting of such union district shall be called in such manner, and at such time and place, as may be agreed upon by the associate districts respectively, by a vote of the same, at the time of forming such union.

SEC. 70. Such union district, at the first meeting thereof, shall choose by ballot a clerk, who shall perform the same duties as are prescribed in relation to the clerks of other school districts, and shall hold his office until another shall be chosen in his stead.

SEC. 71. The several union school districts shall hold their annual meetings for the election of officers on the first Wednesday after the last Tuesday of March in each year; and the term of office of the officers then elected shall continue for one year, and until others are elected.

SEC. 72. Such union district may, at any legal meeting called for that purpose, raise money for erecting, purchasing, renting or repairing any building to be used as a school house for the union school aforesaid, and purchasing or renting land for the use and accommodation thereof; also, for purchasing fuel, furniture, and other necessary articles for the use of said school, and in assessing and collecting a tax or taxes for the above purposes, the like proceedings shall be had as are prescribed by law for other school districts: said district may also determine where said school house shall stand, and in case the location thereof should not be so determined by said district, the same shall be referred to the selectmen of the town in which such districts so uniting are situated, in the same manner as is provided in the case of other districts, and said districts may choose a committee to carry into effect the provisions aforesaid.

SEC. 73. The chairman of the prudential committees, of the various districts composing the Union district, shall together constitute the prudential committee of the union district, and the member of the prudential committee of any school district first elected, shall be considered the chairman thereof: Provided, that whenever such union district shall be formed of an even number of districts, there shall be added to said committee one person, resident in such union district, who shall be chosen annually at any legal meeting of said union district, duly warned for that purpose, and who shall hold his office for one year thereafter, and until another shall be chosen.

SEC. 74. The prudential committee of the union district shall also determine the ages and qualifications of the children of the associated districts, who may attend the union

school; and every union school district shall be entitled to receive their proportion of the public school money as provided in section sixty-seven of this chapter, and under the regulations and conditions therein prescribed; provided, however, that the schools in each of the associated districts shall continue to be maintained in the same manner as if there had been no provision for the establishment of union districts.

SEC. 75. Each union district, at its annual meeting, shall choose a moderator and collector or collectors of taxes, and treasurer, who shall perform the same duties as prescribed in relation to moderator, collector and treasurer of other school districts, and shall hold office until others shall be chosen in their stead, and such union district may, at any legal meeting called for that purpose, raise money for paying teachers' wages, and in assessing and collecting a tax or taxes for that purpose, the like proceedings shall be had as are prescribed by law for other school districts.

SEC. 76. In case any district, being a member of a union school district, becomes dissatisfied therewith, it may withdraw therefrom by a concurrent vote of two-thirds of the voters present, at meetings duly warned for that purpose of the inhabitants of each of said districts respectively, to-wit: the dissatisfied district and the union district: Provided, that the inhabitants of said dissatisfied district shall not be entitled to vote at the meeting of the union district on the question of permitting them to withdraw therefrom.

SEC. 77. If any contiguous school district wishes to join a union school district, it may do so by a vote of two-thirds of the legal voters, inhabitants of said contiguous district, at a meeting duly warned for the purpose, and shall thereupon become a member of, and entitled to share equally with the original members in all the rights and privileges belonging to said union district: provided, such union district shall, by a majority of two-thirds of the voters present, at a meeting duly warned for that purpose, vote to receive such contiguous district.

## TOWN SCHOOL FUND.

SEC. 78. The selectmen of the several towns shall have the charge, care and management of all real and personal estate, in any town, appropriated as a fund for the use of schools in such town, unless otherwise provided for by law, or unless the person, granting such estate, shall direct the same to be kept and managed in some other way, or by some other persons; and the selectmen shall lease all lands, which may be appropriated for such purpose, and loan all

moneys, on annual interest and with sufficient security, and shall annually render an account of the same to the town; and may, in the name of the town, commence, prosecute and defend all actions necessary for the recovery or protection of the estate, so intrusted to their care.

SEC. 79. All leases, bonds, mortgages, and other securities, belonging to such fund, shall be deposited in the office of the treasurer of the town: and the rents, interest and income of such fund, and all moneys received on account of the same, shall be paid into the treasury of such town; and a separate account of the same shall be kept on the books of the treasurer.

SEC. 80. The selectmen of each town shall, annually, previous to the first day of January, assess a tax of nine cents on the dollar, of the list of such town, to be collected and paid to the treasurer of the town previous to the first day of March succeeding, in the same manner that other town taxes are collected, except as provided in the two following sections.

SEC. 81. If, in any town, the income appropriated in such town for the use of schools, after deducting one-half the income arising from the United States deposit money, shall amount to as large a sum as would be raised by such tax, the selectmen shall not be required to assess the same; or if such income shall be less, the selectmen shall assess a tax only sufficient, with such income, to amount to the sum which would be raised by a tax of nine cents on the dollar.

SEC. 82. The several towns may, at the annual March meeting, or at any other meeting warned for that purpose, raise such sum for the use of schools as they may think proper, by a tax on the list of such towns: and if the sums so raised, together with the income appropriated to that use, after the deductions mentioned in the preceding section, shall in any one year amount to as large a sum as would be raised by the tax required by this chapter to be assessed by the selectmen, such tax may be omitted.

SEC. 83. The one-fourth part of the proceeds of the tax assessed by the selectmen, with the income of any town appropriated to the use of schools, and all sums raised by the vote of the town for such use, shall, annually on the first Tuesday of April, be divided by the selectmen of such town between the several common school districts in such town equally, without regard to the number of scholars such districts may contain; and the remainder shall be divided between such districts, including also any Union district, so called, in such town, in proportion to the average daily attendance of the scholars of such districts between the ages

of four and twenty years upon the common school in such districts during the preceding school year; such average daily attendance to be ascertained from the record thereof to be kept in the registers of such school as is prescribed in this chapter, by adding together the number of days of actual attendance of each legal scholar, as shown by the record, and dividing the sum, or aggregate attendance, by the number of days the school has been kept during the year, the quotient to be considered the average daily attendance required, and the same shall be paid over, under the direction of the selectmen, to the several treasurers of such districts; provided, that no Union district, nor district for the support of common schools shall receive any share of such moneys, unless there shall, during the year next preceding such distribution, have been kept in such district a school for the term of two months, with other moneys than those which may be drawn from the town treasury; nor unless the moneys, so drawn from the town treasury, shall have been faithfully expended by such district, in paying teachers' wages, and board, and for fuel for such schools, and for no other purpose; provided, also, that nothing in this section shall affect the powers of the Montpelier Union district, under the act entitled "an Act to enlarge the powers of such district," approved Nov. 21, 1859.

SEC. 84. It shall be the duty of the selectmen, in making their distributions of public moneys, as required in the preceding section of this chapter, to regard the returns of district clerks, as provided for in this chapter, as returns for the year preceding such distribution.

SEC. 85. It shall be the duty of the selectmen of each town, in the month of April annually, after they shall have made division of the public money to the several districts as required by law, to leave with the town clerk of the town, a written statement of the amount of money by them divided to each district during the current school year.

SEC. 86. When any district shall be formed of territory, or of inhabitants, belonging to two or more towns, such district shall receive from the treasury of each town a proportion of the moneys so distributed, as follows:

First. Of that part which, by the provisions of this chapter, is to be divided equally among the districts, such sum as is in the proportion to the sum severally received by the other districts in such town, which the number of children in such district, residing in such town, bears to the whole number of children in such district:

Second. Of that part which is required to be divided among the districts in proportion to the average daily at-

tendance of the scholars, of such districts, between the ages of four years and twenty years, such district shall receive such sums as will be in the proportion to the whole sum, to be divided in such town, which the average daily attendance of children, in such district, residing in such town bears to the average daily attendance of the whole number of children in such town; and the clerk of such district shall make returns to the town clerk in each town, specifying the number of children in the district between the ages of four years and twenty years, the number residing in each of the towns composing such district, the average daily attendance of children in such district, residing in such town, and also the average daily attendance of the whole number of children in such district.

13 Vt. 565. SEC. 87. If the selectmen of any town shall neglect or refuse to assess, collect or appropriate the tax for the support of schools as provided in this chapter, such town shall forfeit and pay to the county, in which such town may be situated, as a penalty, a sum equal to double the amount which the select men shall be required to raise by tax, with costs, to be recovered, by information or indictment, in the county court of such county.

SEC. 88. One-fourth part of such penalty shall be for the use of the county, and the other three-fourths thereof shall be paid to the selectmen for the use of schools in such town; and it shall be the duty of the treasurer of the county immediately after the receipt of such money, to give notice thereof to the selectmen of the town, and the selectmen shall forthwith receive, apportion and appropriate the same to the support of schools in such town, in the same manner, as it should have been, if raised by tax, assessed by the selectmen.

SEC. 89. It shall be the duty of the grand jurors empannelled before the several county courts, annually to inquire and ascertain, whether the several towns in their respective counties shall have duly assessed, collected and expended the tax for the support of schools, as required in this chapter; and in case of any neglect, it shall be the duty of the grand jurors to present their indictment thereof to the court.

SEC. 90. If any person intrusted, according to the provisions of this chapter, with the care, charge or management of any money, land or other property, belonging to any town or school district for the use of schools, shall embezzle, misapply or conceal the same, or any part thereof, he shall be liable to be removed from his trust, and shall forfeit to such town or district, as the case may be, a sum double the amount so embezzled, misapplied or concealed, to be recov-

ered in an action on the case in the name of such town or district, with costs.

## UNITED STATES DEPOSIT MONEY.

SEC. 91. The treasurer of this state shall be authorized to receive any moneys, belonging to the United States, hereafter to be deposited with this state, and to give a certificate of deposit for the same, according to the provisions of the existing law.

SEC. 92. All such moneys belonging to the United States, which have been heretofore, or which shall hereafter be received by the treasurer of this State by deposit from the United States, shall be apportioned to and continue to be distributed and deposited with the several towns in the state organized and unorganized, and to the gores of land in proportion to the number of inhabitants in each, according to the census of the United States, of the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty: Provided, however, that the treasurer of the state shall hold in trust so much of such money as shall appertain to such unorganized towns and gores, to be put to interest for the use of such unorganized towns and gores, as he shall deem most expedient; and he shall pay so much of the interest thereof annually, as may be apportioned to the population thereof, to such unorganized towns and gores, as may be entitled to the same, for having maintained a school or schools therein the previous year; the inhabitants of said unorganized towns and gores being hereby authorized to form themselves into districts for the support of schools, and the payment of such interest shall be made to the treasurers of such districts; and if there be more than one school district in any unorganized town or gore, the same rate shall be observed in apportioning the money among the districts, as is provided for in organized towns.

SEC. 93. It shall be the duty of the treasurer of the state to see that a just and true apportionment among the organized and unorganized towns and gores shall be, or shall have been made of the public moneys so deposited as soon as may be, according to the United States census of eighteen hundred and sixty; and whenever there shall be from time to time a new census of the population of this state under the laws of congress or of this state, a new apportionment of such moneys shall be made by such treasurer among such towns and gores as need be.

SEC. 94. Whenever it shall be found, that, upon any apportionment which shall have been made upon the United States census of eighteen hundred and sixty, or upon any new and subsequent apportionment, any town shall have

more of such moneys than its just proportion, the treasurer shall have a right to demand and recover from such town the amount of such excess; and if it shall be found that any town shall have less than its just proportion, it shall be the duty of the treasurer to make up the deficiency and pay over the same to such town.

SEC. 95. The several towns shall, at each annual meeting, elect one or more trustees, not exceeding three, in the same manner other town officers are elected, whose duty it shall be to receive, take care of, and manage the money deposited with the respective towns, and they shall, at each annual meeting of their respective towns, make a full report of the condition and situation of the deposit money received by them.

SEC. 96. If any town shall neglect or refuse to appoint such trustees, it shall be the duty of the treasurer of the state to retain the proportion, which may belong to such town, and put the same to use, as he shall deem most expedient for obtaining interest for it, and he shall, annually, previous to the first day of March, pay to the treasurer of such town, all the interest or income, which he may receive for the same.

SEC. 97. The trustees of the several towns, before they enter upon the duties of their office, shall execute a bond to such towns, with three or more sufficient sureties, in such sum as the selectmen shall direct and accept, with a condition.

First. Faithfully to perform their duty in loaning, managing and accounting for all sums of money, which may be placed in their charge, under the provisions of this chapter.

Second. To pay over the same, or any part thereof, as may be required by law.

SEC. 98. If any person, elected trustee according to the provisions of section ninety-five of this chapter, shall neglect or refuse to give bonds as provided by the preceding section of this chapter, his office shall be vacant, and such vacancy may be filled by the town by a new choice at any legal meeting, as in other cases of vacancy in town offices.

SEC. 99. When trustees shall be appointed by any town, as provided in this chapter, and shall have given bonds as required in section ninety-seven of this chapter, the treasurer of the state shall pay over, to such trustees, all such moneys as such town shall be entitled to; and the trustees shall thereupon execute to said treasurer their receipt for the same, of the tenor and effect of the certificate of deposit which the treasurer has been or shall be required to give to the secretary of the treasury of the United States.

SEC. 100. Each town, which has or shall appoint trustees, and through them shall or shall have received its proportion of the moneys of the United States, so deposited with this state, shall be accountable to the state for the return of the same, or any part thereof, whenever it shall be required by the treasurer of the state, on the requisition of the United States, or for the purpose of carrying into effect a new apportionment, in like manner as towns are accountable for state taxes.

SEC. 101. The trustees of the several towns shall loan the money, deposited with such towns, in such sums and to such persons as they shall judge expedient, with sufficient personal security, or on mortgage, as they may deem amply safe, taken and made payable to the respective towns, at an interest of six per cent. payable annually.

SEC. 102. The loans shall be made for a term not exceeding one year at one time; and the money may be collected, at the expiration of the period, for which it shall be loaned, and be loaned anew to other persons, or the loan may be extended to the same persons for an additional period, in the discretion of the trustees.

SEC. 103. The trustees of the surplus money of the United States, in the several towns in this state, are authorized to loan the same to their several towns, agreeably to the provisions of this chapter: Provided, that the town shall, at a meeting legally warned and holden for that purpose, authorize the selectmen to borrow the same for the benefit of the town.

SEC. 104. All the income received for interest on the moneys, so deposited with any towns, and all the income, which may be paid over by the treasurer of this state, for interest, to any towns, when such towns shall not appoint trustees and receive their shares of such moneys, shall be annually appropriated to the support of schools in the respective towns.

SEC. 105. It shall be the duty of the trustees, annually, previous to the first day of March, to pay over, to the treasurer of their respective towns, all the income received for interest on such moneys; and the treasurer shall add all sums so received, and such as may be received from the treasurer of this state, for interest, according to the provisions of this chapter, to the other school moneys, and shall give credit for the same, in his account of that fund; and the same shall be distributed by the selectmen, as other moneys, to the several school districts, for the support of schools therein.

SEC. 106. If any town shall have other school funds, the income of which shall be sufficient to support schools in all the districts in such town for six months in each year, such town shall not be required, as provided in the two preceding sections, to appropriate the income of such deposit money, for the support of schools; but may appropriate the same to any other use, as said town shall direct.

SEC. 107. If any town shall refuse or neglect to perform any of the duties required by the provisions of this chapter, in relation to the management or disposition of the money so deposited with such town, or the interest thereof, such town shall, on indictment and conviction thereof, forfeit and pay, as a fine to the treasurer of the county, in which such town shall be situated, and for the use of such county, a sum not exceeding double the amount of the interest of such moneys.

SEC. 108. It shall be the duty of the grand jury, empannelled before any county court, to inquire into the manner, in which the several towns shall have managed and disposed of the moneys so deposited with them, and the annual interest thereof; and, in case of any failure of any town to comply with the requisitions of this chapter, relating to such deposit money, it shall be their duty to present to the court their indictment therefor against such town; and notice thereof shall be given to such town, as is required in case of indictment for not repairing highways.

## STATISTICS.

SEC. 109. The secretary of the Board of Education is hereby required to prescribe blank forms for a school register, conveniently arranged for keeping a daily record of the attendance of children upon the school, and containing printed interrogatories addressed to teachers, and to district clerks, for the procurement of such statistical information as the board may seek to obtain in each year; and such information as will enable the selectmen of any towns interested to divide the public money in districts composed of fractional parts of two or more towns, according to the provisions of this chapter, and in the month of January of each year, the secretary shall procure and furnish to the town clerk in each town in this state, a sufficient number of such registers to supply each district clerk in said town with one register for each school in his district for the ensuing school year. And it is hereby made the duty of each town clerk to receive such registers for his town, and immediately forward by mail to the secretary his receipt therefor; and, on failure to receive such registers by the first day of February in each

year, the town clerk shall immediately notify the secretary thereof, who shall supply the deficiency forthwith. And it is made the duty of each district clerk during the first week in March annually, to procure of the town clerk a register for each school in his district, and be responsible for the safe keeping thereof.

SEC. 110. It is hereby made the duty of every teacher of a common school, or of a union school before he commences his school, to procure from the clerk of the district in which he shall teach, a school register, and therein keep a true record of the daily attendance of each scholar who may attend such school, while under his instruction, in accordance with the form prescribed in such register, and at the close of his school shall enter in said register correct answers to all statistical inquries therein addressed to teachers, and return such register to the district clerk previous to the receipt of his wages as such teacher. And it is hereby made the duty of each district clerk to comply with all the requirements made of him in the register or registers of his district in reference to the statistics of his district, and make oath to the correctness of his returns before a justice of the peace of the county in which he resides, and file said register or registers in the office of the town clerk, in the month of March in each year; and no portion of the public money in any town shall be distributed to any district whose school register or registers shall not be properly filled out and filed in the town clerk's office, pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.

SEC. 111. It shall be the duty of the town clerk of each town, annually on or before the first Tuesday of April, to prepare an abstract of the returns of the several district clerks, and deliver the same to the town superintendent of schools when called for—which abstract shall be as near as may be in the following form:

| Districts | No. heads of families. | No. children of school age. | Weeks taught by males. | Weeks taught by females. | Wages p'd males. | Wages paid females. | Cost of board. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. 1. | | | | | | | |
| " 2. | | | | | | | |
| " 3. | | | | | | | |
| | Cost of fuel &c. | Share of public money. | | | | | |

The foregoing is a true statement of the statistics of the common schools in the town of as obtained by me from the returns of district clerks, made to me in the first Tuesday of April, A. D. 18

Attest, C. D., *Town Clerk.*

SEC. 112. Town superintendents of schools shall annually, on or before the tenth day of April, make out and return to the secretary of the board of education, the statistics of the schools in each district, in their respective towns, in accordance with the forms prescribed by said secretary, agreeably to the provisions of this chapter. And the secretary is directed on receipt of such return, to forward a certificate thereof to the superintendent making the return.

SEC. 113. It is hereby made the duty of the trustees of all the academies and grammer schools which have been incorporated by the legislature of the state of Vermont, to cause their principals to return to the secretary of the board of education, on or before the first day of April in each year, true and correct answers to such statistical inquiries as may have been addressed to them by the secretary in the month of January previous.

## SCHOOL HOUSES AND YARDS.

33 Vt. 271. SEC. 114. Whenever it shall be determined in any school district in what place in said school district the school house shall be located, and the owner or owners of the land upon which it is proposed to locate such house, including, also, sufficient land for school house yards, and convenient and necessary out buildings, shall refuse to sell and convey the same, by deed, to such district, or shall, in the opinion of the prudential committee of such district, demand an unreasonable sum therefor; and also whenever in the opinion of any school district, expressed by vote of such district at a legal meeting warned for that purpose, it shall become necessary to have more land attached to the school house of such district, for the accommodation and convenience of the same, or to enlarge the grounds or lands belonging to and adjoining such school house lands, such district may purchase for the use of the same such lands as may be necessary for the accommodation and convenience of the same; and if the owner or owners of such lands shall refuse to convey the same, by deed, to said district, or, in the opinion of such district, shall demand an unreasonable sum therefor, such district, by their prudential committee, in any of the aforesaid cases, may apply to the selectmen of the town in which such district is located, whose duty it shall be to locate and set out such lands as may be required for any of the aforesaid purposes, and when the same shall have been determined upon by them, to cause the same to be surveyed; and they shall proceed to ascertain what damages shall be sustained by the owner or owners of the same; but before they shall determine the amount of damages which any one may sus-

tain, they shall cause him to be notified of the time and place of hearing, either personally or by leaving written notice at the residence of such owner or owners of the land; and when they shall have completed their inquiries, they shall their report, stating particularly all their proceedings and decision, with their survey and apprisal of damages, if any, and shall file the same in the town clerk's office in the town where such lands are situated, and shall cause the same to be there recorded.

SEC. 115. Before the school district shall enter on such lands, it shall pay, or tender to such owner or owners, the amount of such damages so appraised by said selectmen.

SEC. 116. If the owner or owners of such land shall not accept the damages so appraised by said selectmen, the prudential committee of such district, on behalf of such district, may agree with the owner or owners of such land, to refer the question of damages to one or more disinterested persons, whose award shall be made in writing and shall be final.

SEC. 117. If any person interested in the land which the selectmen may have located and set out, as aforesaid, shall be dissatisfied with such location, or with the compensation awarded for his damages, he may make his application in writing by petition to county court in the same county, and at their next stated term, if there should be sufficient time for notice, and if not, to the next succeeding term, and any number of persons aggrieved may join in the petition: and the petition, together with a citation for that purpose, shall be served on one or more of the prudential committee of such school district, at least twelve days before the session of the county court, and the court shall appoint three disinterested commissioners to inquire into the convenience and the necessity of such school house, and the manner of its location, and of the necessity of such lands and the amount required, as well as the matter of damages which may have been sustained by the persons interested therein.

SEC. 118. The commissioners shall give six days notice to one or more of the prudential committee of such school district, of the time and place when and where they will make such inquiry, and hear the parties; and on the report of such commissioners the court may establish or set aside such location, or such parts thereof as shall appear just, and may render judgment for the petitioner to recover against such school district such sum for damages as shall appear to said court to be just and reasonable, and the court may tax costs for either party as shall appear to be just.

SEC. 119. When application shall be made to the county court as provided in the two preceding sections of this chapter, the opening of the lot of land surveyed and laid out by the selectmen shall be stayed until the decision of the county court in the premises ; and such court may fix the time for opening the same and the payment of damages, and if such damages shall not be paid within the time limited, the court may award execution for the same.

SEC. 120. If any school district shall require lands for any of the purposes specified in the one hundred and fourteenth section of this chapter, and the lands so required to be encumbered by mortgage, such school district shall cause the same notice to be given to the mortgagee, or the assignee of the mortgage, that is required to be given to the owner ; and the damage agreed upon, or otherwise determined, as specified in this chapter, shall be paid to the mortgagee or his assignee ; but if the sum due on the mortgage be less than the damage, the amount due thereon shall be paid to the holder, and the balance to the owner, on the payment of which damage a valid title shall vest in the district for the purpose aforesaid.

AN ACT *directing the Board of Education to select a Text Book of the Geography and History of Vermont.*

SEC. 121. The board of education is hereby directed to select, at its session next year after the passage of this act, some book or books to be used in the district schools of this state as text books of the geography and history of Vermont, which selection shall be published, as soon as may be, in all the newspapers in the state, and also inserted in each school register : and such selection, when thus made and published, shall be authoritative and binding upon the board of education, superintendents, and teachers, until January first, A. D. eighteen hundred and sixty-seven.

## OF INSTRUCTION OF THE DEAF AND DUMB AND BLIND.

SEC. 1. The governor of this state shall, ex-officio, be commissioner of the deaf, the dumb and the blind : and, as such commissioner, shall constitute the board for their instruction.

SEC. 2. A sum not exceeding three thousand dollars may be annually drawn from the treasury of this state, by the governor, for the benefit of the deaf and the dumb, and a

sum not exceeding twenty-seven hundred dollars may also be annually drawn by him, from the treasury, for the benefit of the blind, to be appropriated agreeably to the provisions of this chapter.

SEC. 3. Until provision is otherwise made by law, the beneficiaries mentioned in this chapter, shall be instructed at the following places, that is to say :—the deaf and dumb at the American asylum, established in the city of Hartford, in the state of Connecticut, for the education of the deaf and dumb ; and the blind, at the New England institution for the instruction of the blind, established in the city of Boston, in the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

SEC 4. The board of civil authority in each town shall ascertain, and certify to the county clerk, on or before the first day of February, annually, the number of deaf and dumb persons and the number of blind persons in such town, their respective ages, condition and circumstances and the ability of their parents to educate them, and whether, in the opinion of such board, such deaf and dumb and blind persons are proper subjects of the charity of this state, and whether they and their parents or guardians are willing they should become beneficiaries of either of the institutions mentioned in the third section of this chapter, or such other institution as may be provided by law, for the instruction of deaf and dumb or blind persons.

SEC. 5. Each county clerk shall make return to the governor before the first day of March in each year, of all the information he receives from the several boards of civil authority in his county.

SEC. 6. The governor shall have power to approbate and designate beneficiaries, as aforesaid ; to draw orders on the treasury for any part of the appropriations provided in the second section ; to superintend and direct all concerns relating to the education of deaf and dumb or blind persons, inhabitants of this state, and to allow all or any portion of the expenses of their conveyance to, and support in the institutions in which they are instructed, for such term or time as he shall deem proper, and he may, in his discretion, take bonds to indemnify the state against expenses, which may accrue in consequence of the sickness, clothing or transportation of any of the beneficiaries.

SEC. 7. Whenever any person shall be approbated and designated a beneficiary, under this chapter, the selectmen of the town in which such beneficiary resides are empowered and authorized to defray the expenses of the conveyance of such beneficiary to and from the institution in which such beneficiary is

to be instructed, out of the treasuries of their respective towns, if, in their opinion, the parents or guardians of the beneficiary have not sufficient means to pay the same.

SEC. 8. The governor shall annually report to the legislature the proceedings, with an account of the expenditures incurred in the discharge of these duties.

SEC. 9. The governor of this state shall be entitled to receive from the state treasury annually fifty dollars, as a compensation for his services in the discharge of the duties required by this chapter.

# INDEX TO SCHOOL LAWS.

## THE FIGURES REFER TO THE SECTIONS OF THE LAW.


ACADEMIES—Trustees of Academies incorporated by the State shall, on or before the 1st of April annually, return to the Secretary of the Board correct answers to such statistical inquiries as may have been addressed to them by the Secretary in the month of January previous. 113

AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE—How ascertained. 83

ACCOUNT—Of Town Superintendent of Schools to be audited by State Auditor, 9

—Copy of, to be filed in Town Clerk's Office before March meeting, annually. 10

AUDITOR OF ACCOUNTS—Shall audit the accounts of Town Superintendents of Schools, and draw orders therefor on the State Treasurer. 9

—Shall draw no order for Superintendent's account till he exhibit the receipt of the Secretary of the Board for his statistical returns. 9

ANNUAL MEETING—Of Board of Education. 2

—Of School District. 32

—Of Union District. 71

ANNUAL REPORT—See Report of Secretary.

AUTHENTIC LIST OF BOOKS—To be binding till January 1st, 1867. 7

BOARD OF EDUCATION—To be nominated annually by the Governor, and appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. 1

—To consist of three members, together with the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, who shall be members ex officio. 1

—Shall hold an annual meeting, commencing on Tuesday of the 2nd week of the session of the Legislature. 2

—Shall hold a special meeting during the recess of the Legislature, in the discretion and at the appointment of the Governor, 2

—Shall appoint a Secretary at their annual meeting. 3

—Shall recommend to the Legislature necessary alterations and amendments of law. 4

—Shall make an Annual Report when required. 4

—May at any time fill any vacancy in the Board or office of Secretary, 5

—Compensation of, 6

—To select a Text Book in Geography and History of Vermont. 121

BOOKS—Authentic list of, to be binding till January 1st, 1867. 7

BOARD OF TEACHERS—Expense of, may by vote of School Meeting legally warned therefor, be defrayed by apportioning the same to scholars attending the school, or by assessing a tax upon the same. 50

CHAIRMAN—Of Prudential Committee of district is the member thereof who is first chosen. 73

CERTIFICATE OF SUPERINTENDENT—To be obtained by every Teacher before he opens his school. 11

—To be available for one year only. 11

—Of the Superintendent of an adjoining town to be obtained by a teacher who is himself a Superintendent. 12

—May be revoked for incompetence to teach, or to govern, or for setting an evil example. 16

—After revocation to become null and void thereafter, unless by a vote of the district, 16

—Unless obtained by Teacher be-

fore he begins his school, the contract made with him shall be null and void, 60

CLERK—Of fractional district shall make statistical returns of each fractional portion to the town to which it belongs, 26

—Of district, shall be chosen at the annual meeting, and shall hold his office till another be chosen, 32

—Vacancy in office of, from any cause, shall be supplied by Selectmen till a new election be had, 35

—In absence or disability of, Prudential Committee shall discharge his duties in recording proceedings and certifying same, 36

—Shall keep a fair record of votes and proceedings and certify the same when required, 37

—Shall forfeit twice as much as district would be entitled to draw from town Treasury if he neglect to make return of scholars according to law, or if he make false returns, 57

—Shall forfeit $20 for every ten days' neglect to call School Meeting after legal application to him therefor, 58

—His returns in the School Registers shall be regarded as the returns for the preceding year, 84

—Of fractional district, shall return to the Town Clerk of each town composing it, the number of children in the district between the ages of 4 and 20 years, the number of scholars residing in each of the towns, the average daily attendance of the children of such district resident in each town, and the average daily attendance of the whole number of children in such district, 86

—Shall procure of the Town Clerk, during the first week in March, a Register for each school in his district, and be responsible for the safe keeping thereof, 109

—Shall comply with all requirements of the School Registers, make oath to the correctness of his returns before some Justice of the Peace of the County where he resides, and file the Register or Registers of his district so properly filled out, in the Town Clerk's office, in the month of March, annually, 110

—If he fail to fill up and file the Register or Registers of his district according to law, his district shall receive no portion of the public money, 110

COLLECTOR OF DISTRICT—Shall be chosen at the annual meeting and hold his office till another be chosen, 32

—First Constable of the town may be chosen collector, 33

—Vacancy in office of, from any cause shall be filled by Selectmen till another election be had, 35

—All warrants on tax bills shall be directed to him, 47

—Shall pay over the amount of all taxes to the Treasurer of the district, 47 and 48

—On receipt of tax bill shall, proceed to collect the tax in the same manner and with the same powers as the town collector in the collection of town taxes, within the time limited, and pay the same to the district Treasurer, 49

COMPENSATION—Of Board of Education and Secretary, 6

—Of Board and Secretary to be paid by State Treasurer on the certificate of the Governor, 6

—Of Town Superintendent, 9

—Of Town Superintendent for private examinations of teachers, 14

CONSTABLE—First Constable of any town may be chosen to be Collector of any district, 33

CONTRACT—Any contract with a Teacher who has failed to obtain a certificate of qualification from the Superintendent of the town in which the district is situated before the commencement of his school, according to Section 11, shall be null and void, 60

DISTRICTS—Where inhabitants cannot be accommodated in one district, more shall be formed by the town, 20

Shall be defined, limited, united, divided and altered by the town in town meeting warned therefor, 20

—Shall be numbered in regular series from No. 1 upward, and their number and bounds, and all changes therein shall be recorded, 21

—How originally organized in an organized town, 22

—How organized in an unorganized town or gore, 23

—Fractional districts may be organized from portions of two or more towns—see "Fractional Districts" 24

—Any person may be set to a dis-

trict from an adjoining town in which he resides by vote of that town, 27
—Shall tax the property of any person set to it, as would have been done in his former district had no such removal occurred. 28
—When organized shall have all the powers of a corporation for supporting schools, 29
—Voters in, shall be all men of the age of 21 years, who reside and are liable to pay taxes therein. 29
—May at their annual meeting designate the number of weeks during which at least their Winter and Summer schools shall be sustained, and appoint the time for their beginning, and if the Prudential Committee shall neglect or refuse for more than two weeks after the time appointed, to provide such school, their office becomes vacant, 30
—May take, hold, take care of, and dispose of any real or personal estate conveyed to them for support of schools, and may sue or be sued on contract or for damage done in regard thereto. 31
—Officers of, shall be a moderator, clerk, collector, treasurer, and prudential committee of 1 or 3 voters in district. 32
—Officers of shall be chosen at their annual school meeting which shall be held on the last Thursday in March, annually, and their term of office shall begin at the time of their election and continue till others are chosen, 32
—May elect the First Constable of any town to be their Collector. 33
—Clerk of, to keep fair record of votes and proceedings, and to certify the same when required. 37
—If district omit for six months after their annual meeting to sustain any school for at least two months, all its offices become vacant, and on application of two voters the Selectmen shall proceed to fill such vacancies. 40
—Meetings of, shall be appointed and notified by the clerk, or in his absence or neglect, by one or more of the Prudential Committee, on application in writing by three or more voters in the district, by posting up notices in one or more of the most public places in the district, specifying the time, place and object of the meeting, at least seven and not more than twelve days before the time specified for the meeting. 41
—Annual meeting of, may be notified by the clerk, or, in his absence, or neglect, by the Prudential Committee without any application of voters. 42
—At a legal meeting legally warned, may raise money by tax on Grand List for erecting or repairing their school house, or to purchase or hire a building for a school house, and to purchase land for their school house to stand upon, and for yards, and the erection and accommodation of necessary out-buildings, and to support a school as may be judged necessary or expedient, 43
—May determine, by vote of two-thirds of legal voters present, the location of the school house, and choose a committee to superintend the building and procure furniture, 44
—If the voters of district cannot agree upon a location, the Selectmen of the town, on application of the Prudential Committee, may locate the school house 44
—All real estate in the district shall be taxed therein. 45
May, at any legal meeting, by vote of two-thirds of the the voters present, instruct the Prudential Committee to omit from the tax bill the names of persons unable to pay their proportion of each tax. 46
—Shall raise all moneys for the support of schools upon the Grand List, provided that the expense of fuel and board of teacher may, by vote of meeting legally warned, be defrayed by apportioning the same upon the scholars attending school, or by assessing a tax upon the same. 50
—But cannot assess such tax upon account of scholars who shall not attend the school. 50
—May by vote of two-thirds of the voters present at a meeting legally warned therefor, abate a tax bill assessed, to an amount not exceeding five per cent. thereof. 52
—When composed of portions of different towns, the inhabitants of either portion of it may procure a dissolution of the union. 53
—When fractional district is thus

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] — See [illegible]

[illegible] 32

[illegible] 33

[illegible] — Shall be held [illegible] Agent in May and November 34

—Shall be paid [illegible] 34

[illegible] 34

[illegible] 34

—After forming a union district, shall thereafter maintain schools in each district as if no provision were made for union district. 74

When composing a union district and dissatisfied therewith, may withdraw therefrom by concurrent vote of two-thirds of the union district and dissatisfied district, at legal meetings warned therefor, but the inhabitants of the dissatisfied district shall not vote at the meeting of the union district on the question of withdrawal. 76

Any contiguous district may unite with a union district by a vote of two thirds of its legal voters at a meeting duly warned therefor, provided that two-thirds of the voters present at a legal meeting of the union district duly warned therefor, shall vote to receive such contiguous district. 77

Shall receive a distributive share of public money under certain conditions, (see "public money.") 83

Fractional district's share of public money, how determined, 86

Method of proceeding when districts require for school house yard and outbuildings, when first located, or when additional land is necessary for the enlargement of school premises and the owners thereof refuse to convey, or demand an unreasonable price therefor. 114 to 120

[illegible] 34

—To have same rights and liabilities as other districts. 24

—For all purposes of visitation and returns shall be deemed to belong to the town in which the school house is located. 25

—Clerk of shall make statistical returns of each component portion to the town to which it belongs. 26

—Inhabitants of either town composing it, may procure a dissolution of it. 53

—And after such dissolution each portion shall be deemed a legal school district with all legal powers and rights. 55

—Shall receive, of that portion of the public money which is distributed equally to the districts in each town such sum as is in proportion to the sum received by the other districts in such town which the number of its children resident in such town bears to the whole number of its children: and of that portion distributed in each town in proportion to the average daily attendance of children between the ages of 4 and 20 years, such sum as will be in the proportion to the whole sum so divided which the average daily attendance of its children resident in such town bears to the average daily

attendance of the whole number of children in such town 86
—Clerk of, shall return to the Town Clerk of each town composing it, the number of children in the district between the ages of 4 and 20 years, the number residing in each of the towns, the average daily attendance of the children of such district resident in each town and the average daily attendance of the whole number of children in such district, 86
FUEL—Furniture and all appendages and things necessary for the advancement of schools, to be provided by the Prudential Committee at the expense of the district, 39
—Expense of, and of teacher's board may by vote of school meeting legally warned, be defrayed by apportioning the same to the scholars attending the school, or by assessment of a tax upon the same, 50
GRAMMAR SCHOOLS.—The Trustees of all Grammar Schools and Academies, which have been incorporated by the State, shall, on or before the 1st of April, annually, return to the Secretary of the Board correct answers to such statistical inquiries as may have been addressed to them by the Secretary in the month of January previous, 113
GRAND JURORS—Shall annually inquire whether the several towns in their respective counties have duly assessed, collected and expended the tax for the support of schools as required by law, and in case of neglect shall present their indictment therefor, 89 and 108
GRAND LIST—Taxes on, may be laid by vote of legal meeting legally warned to erect or repair school houses, to purchase or hire buildings for school houses, to purchase land for school house to stand upon, and for yards and for erection and accomodation of necessary out-buildings, and to support schools as may be necessary and expedient, 43
GRADED or HIGH SCHOOLS—See "High Schools."
GORE—Districts in, how organized, 23
GOVERNOR—To nominate the Board of Education, 1
—To be ex-officio a member of Board of Education, 1
—To certify expenses of Board and Secretary, 6
HIGH OR GRADED SCHOOLS—How organized, 61 to 65
—Any of the sciences or higher branches of a thorough education may be directed to be taught therein, by vote of majority of district at any meeting legally warned therefor, 63
—Prudential Committee of, or a special committee shall examine scholars and designate which school they shall attend, 64
—Prudential Committee may consent to the attendance of non-resident children upon the higher school, and prescribe the terms therefor, 65
INSTITUTES—For teachers shall be held annually in each County, 3
—The time spent by teachers in attending the Institutes not exceeding two days shall be allowed to teachers as though the same were spent in teaching their school, 18
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR—To be ex-officio a member of the Board of Education, 1
MEETING—Of school district shall be appointed and notified by the clerk, and in his absence or neglect, by one or more of the prudential committee, on application in writing of three or more legal voters in the district, by posting in one or more of the most public places in the district notices specifying the time, place, and object of the meeting, at least seven and not more than twelve days before the time specified for the meeting, 41
Annual, shall be held on the last Tuesday of March annually, 32
MODERATOR—Of school meeting shall be chosen at the annual meeting, and hold office till another be chosen, 32
Pro tempore, to preside at any meeting legally warned, may be chosen in case of the death, absence or disability of the moderator, 34
MONEYS—Raised by districts for the support of schools shall be raised on the Grand List; but the cost of fuel and board of teacher may by vote of district at a meeting legally warned, be defrayed by apportioning it upon scholars attending school, or by assessing a tax upon the same, 50

OFFICERS—Of district shall be Moderator, Clerk, Collector, Treasurer and Prudential Committee of one or three voters in the district, 32

Shall be chosen at the annual meeting, which shall be held on the last Tuesday in March annually. 32

Shall hold their office from the time of their election till others be chosen, 32

Of union district, shall be chosen at the annual meeting, and hold office for one year, and till others be chosen, 71

PROPERTY—Of a person set to a district in an adjoining town, shall be taxed in such district as it would have been in his former district had no such removal occured, and shall be taxed only there, 28

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE—Cannot lawfully pay teacher for services performed after revocation of his certificate, unless by a vote of the district. 16

Office to become vacant upon neglect or refusal to provide a school within two weeks from the time appointed by the district for the commencement of the school, 30

Shall consist of one or three voters in the district. 32

Shall be chosen at annual meeting, 32

Shall hold office till another be be chosen, 32

Vacancy in office of, from any cause, shall be supplied by the selectmen till a new election. 35

Shall discharge the duties of clerk in his absence or neglect, in recording the proceedings of the district and certifying the same, 36

Shall keep the school house in good order at the expense of the district. 39

In case there be no school house, shall provide a suitable place for school at the expense of the district. 39

Shall see that fuel, furniture, and all appendages and things necessary for the advantage of the school be provided. 39

Shall appoint, and agree with teacher, and remove him when necessary. 39

Shall adopt all requsite measures for the inspection, examination and regulation of the school, and for the improvement of the scholars in learning, 39

When appointed by selectmen to fill vacancy arising from omission to support two months school for six months after a school meeting, shall sustain at least four months sufficient school in such district for each school year, at the expense of the district, and without previous vote of such district may assess the tax necessary for such purpose, and make out rate-bill therefor. 40

When voters cannot agree upon the location of school house, shall apply to the selectmen who may locate the same. 44

As soon as necessary after vote of district raising a tax, shall assess a tax on the list of the inhabitants of district, and on lands of non-residents, and make out rate-bill of same, 47

Shall draw orders on the Treasurer of district for all sums due therefrom, 48

Shall have the same authority to enforce the payment of district taxes, which the Treasurer of a town has to enforce payment of town taxes, 51

When it is his duty to warn school meeting, shall, if he neglect or refuse to warn such meeting after legal application therefor, forfeit twenty dollars for every delay of ten days, 58

Shall be liable in an action to the district, for any money he may pay to a teacher who has not obtained a certificate, 51

Of district having two or more schools, shall have power to examine the qualifications of scholars and designate what school they shall each attend, 64

Of district having two or more schools, may allow children of non-residents to attend the higher school and prescribe the terms therefor, 65

Of union district shall be composed of the chairmen of the prudential committees of the component districts, one being added by vote of district when the number of component districts is even, 73

Chairman of, is the member first elected. 73

Of union district, shall determine the ages and qualifications of the children of the associated districts who may attend the union school, 74

PUBLIC MONEY—Upon the division thereof, the orders therefor shall be made payable to the Treasurers of the several districts, 48

One-fourth of, shall, annually on the first Tuesday of April, be by the selectmen divided equally between the common school districts; and three-fourths thereof shall be divided between the common school districts, and union districts, if any in town, in proportion to the average daily attendance of the scholars of such district between the ages of four and twenty years, upon the schools of such districts, but no district shall receive any portion thereof, unless there shall have been kept therein during the preceding year, school for the term of two months with other moneys than those drawn from the town treasury, nor unless the moneys so drawn from town treasury shall have been faithfully expended in payment of teacher's wages, board, and fuel, and for no other purpose, 83

Distributive share of public money, belonging to any district shall be paid to the treasurer thereof, 83

How distributed to fractional district, see "fractional districts," 86

RATE BILL—Shall be made out by the prudential committee, as soon as necessary after the vote of the district raising the tax, 47

Shall have a warrant attached made out by some justice of the peace, directed to the collector, and requiring him to collect the tax within the time therein limited, and pay the same to the treasurer of the district, 47

REAL ESTATE—All real estate taxable for school purposes shall be taxed in the district where it is situated, 45

RECORD.—Of votes and proceedings of school meeting shall be kept by the clerk and certified by him when required, 37

REPORT OF SECRETARY—Shall annually be made to the Board at their annual session, 3

3500 copies shall be prepared annually, 8

Shall be ready for distribution on the first day of the session of the Legislature, 8

How distributed, 8

REVOCATION—Of certificate of teacher, may be made for incompetence to teach or to govern, or for setting an evil example, 16

Makes such certificates thereafter, null and void, 16

Shall be filed in the town clerk's office, 16

STATISTICS—Secretary's receipt for, must be exhibited to the auditor before the superintendent's account can be audited, 9

Forms for school registers shall be prepared and furnished by the secretary for procuring statistics, 109, [see "registers."

Each teacher and district clerk shall duly answer all questions in the registers in reference to, 110

Registers shall be filled out, and filed in March annually, 110

No portion of public money shall be distributed to any district that shall not duly furnish its statistics, 110

SELECTMEN—Shall appoint superintendent when from any cause a vacancy exists, 17

Shall organize districts and how, in organized town, 22

Of any organized town, may organize districts in an unorganized town and how, 23

Shall locate school house on application of the prudential committee when the voters cannot agree, 44

Of town or towns in which a union district is situated, may locate school house of union district on the failure of union district to agree, 72

Shall have charge and management of all real and personal estate appropriated as a fund for the use of schools in any town, unless other provision is made by law or by the grantor, and shall lease all lands and loan on annual interest all moneys with sufficient security, that are appropriated for the use of schools, and account annually for the same to the town, and may prosecute or defend all actions necessary for

the recovery or protection of such estate, 78

Shall, annually before the 1st of January, assess a tax of nine cents on the dollar of the Grand List, to be collected and paid to town treasurer before the 1st of March succeeding, 80

May omit the nine cent tax if the income appropriated to the use of schools after deducting one-half of the income of the United States deposit money shall equal the amount that would be raised by the nine cent tax, 81

Or may assess a tax sufficient, with such income, to equal the nine cent tax, 81

And may omit the nine cent tax if the money voted for the use of schools in the annual March meeting, together with the income appropriated to the use of schools, shall equal the amount of the nine cent tax, 82

Shall annually on the first Tuesday in April, divide the public money, one-fourth thereof equally between the common school districts, and three-fourths thereof between the common school and union districts, if any, in proportion to the average daily attendance of the scholars of such districts, between the ages of four and twenty years, upon the common schools of such districts, and shall pay over their respective shares to the treasurers of such districts, provided that no common or union district shall receive any portion of such money, unless there shall have been sustained during the year preceding, in such districts, schools for the term of two months, with other moneys than those drawn from the town treasury, nor unless the moneys drawn from the town treasury shall have been faithfully expended in the payment of teacher's wages, board and fuel, and for no other purpose, 83

Shall annually in the month of April, after making division of public money, leave a written statement of the amount distributed with the town clerk, 85

On neglect or refusal of selectmen of any town to assess, collect or appropriate the tax for the support of schools provided by law, such town shall forfeit and pay to the county in which it is situated, double the amount which the selectmen were required to raise by tax, 87

One-fourth of such penalty shall be for the use of the county, and the other three-fourths shall be paid to the selectmen for the use of schools in such town, 88

SECRETARY OF BOARD OF EDUCATION—Shall be appointed at the annual meeting of the board, 3

Shall keep a record of the doings of the Board, 3

Shall hold annually one Institute in each county, 3

Shall visit all parts of the State and deliver lectures, 3

Shall confer with superintendents, and furnish them blank forms for statistics, 3

Shall prepare and present an annual Report, 3

Shall make suggestions for the improvement of the schools, 3

Shall present information in regard to systems of instruction in other states and countries, 3

Compensation of, 6

Shall prescribe forms for a school register, arranged for keeping a record of daily attendance, and containing printed interrogatories addressed to teachers and district clerks for the procurement of statistical information, 109

Shall arrange the register so as to contain the information necessary to enable the selectmen to divide the public money to fractional districts, 109

Shall furnish annually in the month of January enough registers to each town clerk to supply each district with one register for each school in such district, for which he shall receive the receipts of the various town clerks, 109

Shall supply all deficiencies in registers when notified thereof, 109

Shall, on receipt of the statistics of the schools from the various superintendents, forward to them a certificate thereof, 112

SPECIAL MEETING OF BOARD—Shall be called by the Governor in his discretion, 2

SCHOOLS—Suggestions for the improve-

ment of, shall be made in the annual report of the secretary, 2
Shall be visited by the superintendent at least once in each year, 10
Each organized town in the state shall keep and support one or more scoools, provided with competent teachers, of good morals, in which shall be taught orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and special instruction shall be given in the geography, history, constitution and principles of government of the State of Vermont, 19
Fuel, furniture, and all appendages and things necessary for the advantage of, shall be provided by the prudential committee, 39
All requisite measures for the inspection, examination and regulation of, shall be adopted by the prudential committee, 39
CHOOL DISTRICTS—See "Districts."
CHOOL REGISTERS—Blank forms of, to be prescribed by the Secretary of Board, 109
Shall be arranged for keeping a record of the daily attendance of scholars, and contain printed interrogatories addressed to teachers and to district clerks, for the procurement of statistical information, and to enable the selectmen to distribute the public money to fractional districts, 109
Shall be furnished and forwarded to each town clerk in quantity sufficient to supply to each district clerk in every town, one for each school in the district, 109
Shall be received by the town clerk, and a receipt therefor immediately forwarded, 109
If not received by February 1st, the town clerk shall immediately notify the secretary, 109
Any deficiency of registers shall be immediately supplied by the secretary. 109
Of each district shall be procured by the district clerk in first week of March annually. 109
District clerk shall be responsible for the safe keeping of the register, 109
Of each school shall be procured by the teacher before he begins his school, 110
A true record therein shall be kept by each teacher, 110
All statistical inquiries therein addressed to teachers shall be answered correctly in accordance with the forms therein prescribed, by each teacher, and the register returned by him to the district clerk before he receives his wages, 110
All the requirements therein made of the district clerk to be complied with by him, and the correctness of his answers to all statistical inquiries verified by oath before a justice of the peace of the county where he resides, and the register be filed by the district clerk in the town clerk's office, in the month of March annually, 110
No portion of the public money to be distributed to any district whose register shall not be duly filled out and filed according to law, 110
School Fund—All real and personal estate in any town appropriated for the use of schools, unless otherwise provided for by law, or by the grantor, shall be under the charge and management of the selectmen, who shall lease all lands and loan with good security on annual interest all moneys and render annually their account to the town, and who may prosecute and defend all necessary actions in regard thereto, 78
All leases, lands, mortgages and securities belonging to the school fund shall be deposited in the office of the treasurer of the town, and rents, interest, income and all moneys received on account of same, shall be paid into the town treasury, and a separate account shall be kept thereof, 79
A nine cent tax on the dollar of the grand list shall be assessed by the selectmen on the first of January annually, to be collected and paid to town treasurer before the first of March succeeding, 80
Trustees of shall be annually elected at the March meeting in each town, who shall take care of the fund and report in regard to its situation annually to the annual town meeting, 95

If town neglect or refuse to elect trustees as provided by law, the treasurer shall retain the portion of the public money belonging to such town, and annually before the first of March, pay the income thereof to the town treasurer, 96

Trustees of, shall give bonds before they enter on the discharge of their duties, 97

If trustees fail to give bonds, their offices shall become vacant, and may be filled by election at any legal meeting, 98

Trustees, when appointed, and having given bonds, shall receive from the treasurer and give receipts for such moneys as the town may be entitled to, 99

Each town shall be accountable to the state for the return of its proportion of the U. S. deposit money when required on the requisition of the U. S. or for a new apportionment, 100

Money deposited with towns to be loaned on sufficient security taken to the town, at 6 per cent. on interest, 101

Loans to be made for a term not exceeding one year, 102

May be loaned to town, 103

Income of, shall be appropriated to the support of schools in the respective towns, 104

Income of, shall be annually paid to the town treasury before the first day of March, who shall give credit therefor, and the same shall be distributed as other moneys by the selectmen to the various districts, 105

No portion of income of, shall be distributed to any district whose register shall not have been filled out and filed according to law, 110

SCHOOL YEAR—Begins on first day of April, and ends on the last day of March annually, 38

SCHOOL HOUSE—Location of, in fractional district shall determine the town to which it belongs, for purposes of visitation and returns, 25

Shall be kept in good order by the prudential committee at the expense of the district, 39

In case there be no school house, the prudential committee shall provide a suitable place at the expense of the district, 39

District may locate by vote of two thirds of legal voters present, and if the voters cannot agree, the selectmen may locate on the application of the prudential committee, 44

When located, and the owners of land refuse to convey the necessary land for school house, yard and outbuildings, or shall demand an unreasonable sum therefor, or when the owners of land refuse to convey land necessary for the enlargement of the school premises—method of procedure, 114—120

SUPERINTENDENTS—Of schools shall recomend only books from authentic list, 7

Shall be elected at March meeting, 9

Shall hold office during ensuing school year, 9

And when appointed by selectmen, during the remainder of the school year, 9

Compensation of, 9

Shall make a detailed account, 9

Shall make oath or affirmation to his account, 9

Shall present his account to the auditor of accounts, 9

His account shall be paid from the state treasury, 9

Can receive no order for his account till he exhibit the secretary's receipt for statistics, 9

Can only charge, in any visit for twice as many days as there are districts in town, 9

Shall visit all the common schools in town, at least once in each year, 10

Shall examine into the state of schools, and advise the teachers as to the government and instruction of them, 10

Shall adopt requisite measures for the examination, regulation and improvement of schools, 10

Shall file a copy of his account for services with the town, clerk on or before the day previous to March meeting, 10

Shall require of teachers full evidence of good moral character, 11

Shall examine teachers as to capacity to teach and govern schools, 11

When himself desiring to teach, shall obtain the certificate of the

superintendent of some adjoining town, 12
Shall give public notice of examinations of teachers, 13
Shall examine teachers publicly in some public place, in the months of April or May, and November, after due notice, 14
Shall invite citizens to attend the public examinations, 14
Shall examine teachers at public examinations, except in his discretion, and when applicants are prevented by sickness or other unavoidable circumstances from attending public examination, 14
Shall lodge in town clerk's office, on or before the first of February annually, a list of the names of teachers certified during the year with the dates of their certificates, 15
May revoke the certificate of teacher on finding him incompetent to teach or govern, or setting an evil example, 16
On revoking certificate, shall deliver a copy of such revocation to the prudential committee, and to the teacher, and file the same in the town clerk's office, 16
In case of vacancy, shall be appointed by the selectmen, 17
When appointed by selectmen, to have same legal powers as when regularly elected, 17
Shall, annually, on or before the tenth of April, make out and return to secretary of the board, the statistics of schools in each district in their respective towns, according to the forms prescribed by the secretary, 112

SCHOOL STUDIES—Each organized town in the state shall keep and support one or more schools, for the instruction of the young in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and good behavior; and special instruction shall be given in the geography and history, constitution and principles of government of the State of Vermont, 19

TAXES—The property of any person set to a district in an adjoining town shall be taxed in such district, and only there, 28
For support of school for four months in each year where the district offices are vacated by neglect to support at least two months school for six months after annual meeting, may be assessed by the prudential committee that shall be appointed by the selectmen, 40
On grand list may be laid by district, by vote in legal meeting legally warned, to erect or repair school house, to purchase or hire building for school house, to purchase land for school house to stand upon, and for yards, and for the erection and accommodation of the necessary outbuildings, and to support school as may be deemed necessary or expedient, 43
All real estate shall be taxed for school purposes in the district in which it is situated, 45
In the collection of district taxes, the collector may proceed in the same manner and with the same powers as may the town collector in collecting town taxes, 49
For the support of schools, shall be raised upon the grand list, provided that the district, by vote of a meeting legally warned, may defray expense of fuel and teacher's board by apportioning the same to the scholars that attend the school, or by assessing a tax upon the same, 50
But no taxes shall be assessed on account of scholars who shall not attend the school, 50
The payment of, may be enforced by prudential committee, who shall have the same authority therefor which the town treasurer has to enforce payment of town taxes, 51
Abatement of taxes assessed by district, to an amount not exceeding five per cent. of the tax bill, may be made by vote of two-thirds of the voters present at a meeting legally warned for that purpose, 52
A town tax of nine cents on the dollar of the grand list shall, annually previous to January first, be assessed by the selectmen, to be collected and paid to the town treasurer previous to the first of March succeeding, 80
If, in any town, the income appropriated to the use of schools, after deducting one-half of the income of the United States deposit money, shall amount to as much as would be rais-

ed by the nine cent tax, the selectmen need not assess it, or if such income be less, the selectmen shall assess only a tax sufficient, with such income to equal the amount of a nine cent tax, 81

If the amount raised in any town by tax at the annual meeting, together with the income appropriated to schools, shall, after the deduction required, equal the amount of the nine cent tax, the same may be omitted, 82

TAX BILLS—Shall be made payable to the treasurer of the district, 48

TEACHERS' INSTITUTES—See "Institutes."

TEACHERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS—To recommend only books that are in the authentic list, 7

To be examined by the superintendent and obtain certificate of qualification before opening school, 11

To be allowed the time spent in attending the Institute, not exceeding two days, 18

To be appointed and agreed with by prudential committee, and to be removed by him if necessary, 39

Contract for teaching, of one who fails to obtain the certificate of the town in which the district is located before he begins his school, according to Sec. 11, shall be null and void, 60

Shall procure the register of his school before he begins his school, 110

Shall keep a true record in the register, according to the form therein prescribed; shall answer all the statistical inquiries therein addressed to him, and return the register to the district clerk, before the receipt of his wages, 110

TREASURER OF STATE—To pay compensation of the board and secretary, on the certificate of the Governor, 6

Shall receive and give certificates of deposit for the United States deposit money, 91

Shall hold in trust the share of United States deposit money belonging to unorganized towns and gores, paying them the interest thereof annually, 92

Shall cause a true and just apportionment of deposit money to be made among the organized and unorganized towns and gores, according to the United States census of 1860, as soon as may be, and when, from time to time, a new census, under national or state law shall be taken, he shall make a new apportionment, 93

When, upon any apportionment, any town shall be found to have more than its just proportion of public moneys, the treasurer shall demand and recover of it the excess, and if any town have less than its just proportion, the treasurer shall make up the deficiency, 94

TREASURER OF DISTRICT—Shall be chosen at the annual meeting and hold office till another be chosen, 32

Shall make an annual report to the district of the amount of money received and disbursed by him, 32

Vacancy in office of, from any cause, shall be supplied by the selectmen till a new election, 35

All taxes shall, by the warrant, made payable to the treasurer of district, 48

The distributive share of the public money belonging to each district, shall be paid to its treasurer, 83

TRUSTEES OF PUBLIC MONEY—One or more, not exceeding three, shall be elected at the annual meeting in each town, who shall receive and take care of money deposited with the various towns, and annually report to March meeting the condition and situation of the deposit money received by them, 95

If any town neglect or refuse to elect such trustees, the treasurer shall retain the proportion of public money belonging to such town, and annually before the 1st of March, pay the income thereof to the treasurer of such town, 96

Shall give bonds before they enter upon their duties, 97

If they neglect to give bonds, their offices are vacated, 98

Such vacancy may be filled by election at any legal meeting, 98

Shall loan the public money on sufficient personal or mortgage security, taken to the town, at six per cent. annual interest, 101

All loans shall be made for a term not exceeding one year, at the expiration of which the money may be collected, or the loan extended, in the discretion of the trustees, 102

May loan the deposit money to their towns, provided the towns, at legal meetings, warned therefor, shall authorize their selectmen to borrow the same for the town. 103

All the income arising from the deposit money in any town, shall be annually appropriated to the use of schools in such town. 104

Shall annually before the first of March, pay over to the treasurer of their respective towns all the income received for interest on deposit money, and the treasurer shall give credit therefor in his account, and the same shall be distributed, as other moneys are by the selectmen to the various districts. 105

TOWNS—Shall elect a town superintendent of schools at their annual March meeting. 9

Each organized town shall keep and support one or more schools, provided with competent teachers, of good morals, for the instruction of the young in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and good behavior; and special instruction shall be given in the geography and history, constitution and principles of government of the state of Vermont. 19

Shall form additional districts when the inhabitants cannot be accommodated in one. 20

In town meeting notified therefor, may define, determine, limit, unite, divide and alter districts. 20

Shall number districts in regular order, and cause their boundaries and all changes therein to be recorded, 21

In organized town, districts to be organized by the selectmen. 22

In unorganized town, districts may be organized by the selectmen of any organized town. 23

Two or more town, by concurrent vote, may organize fractional districts from portions of each town. 24

May set any person, resident therein, to a district in an adjoining town by vote in town meeting. 27

Shall previously to January 1st annually, have assessed by the selectmen, a tax of nine cents on the dollar of the grand list. 80

And for neglect or refusal to make such assessment, shall forfeit twice the amount that would be raised by a tax of nine cents on the dollar of grand list, 87 and 88

If town fail duly to assess, collect, or appropriate the tax as required by law, for support of schools, it shall be indicted by the grand jury. 89

Shall, annually at annual meeting, elect one or more, not exceeding three trustees, who shall receive and take care of the deposit money of the town and annually render an account of its condition to the annual meeting. 95

If any town refuse or neglect to elect such trustees, the treasurer shall retain the town's proportion of deposit money and pay the income thereof annually to the town treasurer before the 1st of March. 96

Trustees of public money shall give bonds, 97

If trustees fail to give bonds their offices are vacated, and may be filled by election at any legal meeting, 98

Shall be accountable to the state for the return of their shares of the United States deposit money when required on requisition of the United States, or for a new apportionment, 100

May borrow the income of deposit money, 103

Shall appropriate for the support of schools all the income arising from the deposit money. 104

Unless the town have other school funds, the income of which is sufficient to support schools in all its districts for six months in each year. 106

Shall be liable to indictment for neglect or refusal to perform the duties required by law. 107

TOWN SCHOOL FUND—See "School Fund."

TOWN CLERK—To receive and file copy of superintendent's account. 10

To receive and give receipts for school registers. 109

On failure to receive registers by February 1st, he shall immediately notify the secretary thereof. 109

Shall, annually, on or before the first Tuesday in April deliver to the superintendent when called for, an abstract of the returns of the district clerk. 111

TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS—See "Superintendents."

UNITED STATES DEPOSIT MONEY—The treas-

urer of state shall receive and give certificate of deposit for any moneys of United States hereafter to be deposited with this state, 91

All such moneys belonging to the United States heretofore or hereafter received, shall be apportioned to and continue to be distributed and deposited with the towns organized and unorganized, and gores, in proportion to the number of inhabitants by the United States census of 1860, till another United States census be taken, 92

Treasurer shall hold in trust the shares of unorganized towns and gores, paying the interest annually, in proportion to the inhabitants thereof. 92

A true and just apportionment of deposit money, among the organized and unorganized towns and gores, shall be made by the treasurer of state as soon as may be after the United States census of 1860, and so from time to time after each new census by the United States, or by state law, 93

Upon each new apportionment of deposit money, the respective shares of the several towns shall be regulated, 94

One or more, not exceeding three, trustees of deposit money shall be annually elected in each town at March meeting, 95

If town neglect or refuse to elect trustees, the treasurer shall retain its portion and annually pay the interest thereof to the town treasurer, 96

Trustees of, to give bonds, 97

If trustees neglect to give bonds their offices become vacant, and may be filled at any legal meeting, 98

Each town shall be responsible to the state for the return of its share of United States deposit money when required on requisition of United States, or for a new apportionment, 100

The income of deposit money in each town shall be loaned on sufficient personal and mortgage security, to be taken to the town, at six per cent. annual interest, 101

Loans of, shall be made for a term not exceeding one year at a time, 102

Income of, may be loaned to the various towns under certain conditions, 103

Income of, in each town shall be annually appropriated to the support of schools, 104

Trustees shall annually before the 1st of March pay over to town treasurer all the income, and treasurer shall give credit therefor, and same shall be distributed as other moneys by the selectmen to the various districts, 105

Need not be so appropriated to the use of schools if the town has other school funds the interest of which shall be sufficient to support six months school in all the districts in town, 106

UNION DISTRICTS—Any two or more contiguous districts may unite and form a union district, for the support of a union school, by vote of two-thirds of the voters present at meetings legally warned in each district for that purpose, 66

As to that portion of the public money distributed for the attendance of scholars in the towns where they are located, union districts shall be accounted as common school districts and receive a proportionate share of public money under the regulations provided for common school districts, 67—74

Shall be bodies corporate like common school districts, and be called by such name as the district, at its first meeting shall determine, 68

First meeting of, shall be called at such time and place as the associate districts respectively, shall, by vote of same determine, 69

At first meeting shall choose a clerk with usual powers and duties, who shall hold office till another be chosen, 70

Annual meeting of, shall be held on the first Wednesday after the last Tuesday in March annually, 71

Officers of, shall be chosen at annual meeting, and shall hold office one year and till others be chosen, 71

May, at any legal meeting called therefor, raise money to erect, repair, rent or purchase building for school house and for land for same, and for purchasing fuel, furniture and other necessary articles, and in asses-

ing and collecting taxes therefor, like proceedings shall be had as in common school districts, 72

May determine the location of school house, and if the district do not determine its location, it may be referred to the selectmen of town or towns in which the uniting districts are situated, 72

May choose committee to carry the provisions made into effect, 72

Chairmen of the prudential committees of the uniting districts shall constitute the prudential committee of the union district, the union district adding one when the number of uniting districts is even, 73

Schools shall continue to be maintained in each of the uniting districts, after forming a union district, as if no provision for the formation of a union district were made, 74

At annual meeting shall choose moderator, collector, and treasurer, all with the same powers and rights, and duties that pertain to similar offices in common school districts, 75

Such officers shall hold office till others be chosen, 75

May raise money to pay teacher's wages at any legal meeting called therefor, 75

Any united district, or district forming part of union district, being dissatisfied, may withdraw therefrom by concurrent vote of two-thirds of the voters present at legal meetings, both of the union district and dissatisfied district, but the inhabitants of the dissatisfied district shall not vote at the meeting of the union district on the question of withdrawal, 76

Any contiguous district, by vote of two-thirds of legal voters thereof at a meeting thereof duly warned therefor, may join and become a member of a union district, if said union district by a majority of two-thirds of the voters present at a legal meeting warned therefor, shall vote to receive such contiguous district, 77

VACANCY—In the board or office of secretary may be filled by the board. 5

In the office of superintendent, from any cause to be filled by the selectmen, 17

In office of prudential committee on account of neglect or refusal to provide a school within two weeks from time appointed by district, may be filled by vote of legal school meeting warned therefor, 30

In office of clerk, collector, treasurer, or prudential committee from any cause, shall be supplied by the selectmen until a new election, 35

Will be caused in all the offices of the district by a neglect of six months after its annual meeting to support at least two months school, 40

And such vacancies shall, on application of two voters, be filled by the selectmen, 40

VOTER IN SCHOOL MEETING—Any man shall be, who is of the age of 21 years, and shall reside and be liable to pay taxes in the district, 29

WARNING—For school meeting shall be issued by the clerk, or in his absence by the prudential committee, on application in writing of three or more legal voters in district, and posted in one or more of the most public places in the district, specifying the time, place and object of the meeting, at least seven and not more than twelve days before the time specified for the meeting, 41

For annual meeting may be issued by the clerk, or in his absence or neglect by the prudential committee without any application by voters, 42

WARRANT—On tax bill shall be made out by some justice of the peace of the county, and directed to the collector, requiring him to collect the tax therein, within the time therein limited, and pay the same to the treasurer of the district, 47

urer of state shall receive and give certificate of deposit for any moneys of United States hereafter to be deposited with this state, 91

All such moneys belonging to the United States heretofore or hereafter received, shall be apportioned to and continue to be distributed and deposited with the towns organized and unorganized, and gores, in proportion to the number of inhabitants by the United States census of 1860, till another United States census be taken, 92

Treasurer shall hold in trust the shares of unorganized towns and gores, paying the interest annually, in proportion to the inhabitants thereof, 92

A true and just apportionment of deposit money, among the organized and unorganized towns and gores, shall be made by the treasurer of state as soon as may be after the United States census of 1860, and so from time to time after each new census by the United States, or by state law, 93

Upon each new apportionment of deposit money, the respective shares of the several towns shall be regulated, 94

One or more, not exceeding three, trustees of deposit money shall be annually elected in each town at March meeting, 95

If town neglect or refuse to elect trustees, the treasurer shall retain its portion and annually pay the interest thereof to the town treasurer, 96

Trustees of, to give bonds, 97

If trustees neglect to give bonds their offices become vacant, and may be filled at any legal meeting, 98

Each town shall be responsible to the state for the return of its share of United States deposit money when required on requisition of United States, or for a new apportionment, 100

The income of deposit money in each town shall be loaned on sufficient personal and mortgage security, to be taken to the town, at six per cent. annual interest, 101

Loans of, shall be made for a term not exceeding one year at a time, 102

Income of, may be loaned to the various towns under certain conditions, 103

Income of, in each town shall be annually appropriated to the support of schools, 104

Trustees shall annually before the 1st of March pay over to town treasurer all the income, and treasurer shall give credit therefor, and same shall be distributed as other moneys by the selectmen to the various districts, 105

Need not be so appropriated to the use of schools if the town has other school funds the interest of which shall be sufficient to support six months school in all the districts in town, 106

UNION DISTRICTS—Any two or more contiguous districts may unite and form a union district, for the support of a union school, by vote of two-thirds of the voters present at meetings legally warned in each district for that purpose, 66

As to that portion of the public money distributed for the attendance of scholars in the towns where they are located, union districts shall be accounted as common school districts and receive a proportionate share of public money under the regulations provided for common school districts, 67—74

Shall be bodies corporate like common school districts, and be called by such name as the district, at its first meeting shall determine, 68

First meeting of, shall be called at such time and place as the associate districts respectively, shall, by vote of same determine, 69

At first meeting shall choose a clerk with usual powers and duties, who shall hold office till another be chosen, 70

Annual meeting of, shall be held on the first Wednesday after the last Tuesday in March annually, 71

Officers of, shall be chosen at annual meeting, and shall hold office one year, and till others be chosen, 71

May, at any legal meeting called therefor, raise money to erect, repair, rent or purchase building for school house and for land for same, and for purchasing fuel, furniture and other necessary articles, and in asses-

OFFICERS--Of district shall be Moderator, Clerk, Collector, Treasurer and Prudential Committee of one or three voters in the district, 32

Shall be chosen at the annual meeting, which shall be held on the last Tuesday in March annually, 32

Shall hold their office from the time of their election till others be chosen, 32

Of union district, shall be chosen at the annual meeting, and hold office for one year, and till others be chosen, 71

PROPERTY--Of a person set to a district in an adjoining town, shall be taxed in such district as it would have been in his former district had no such removal occured, and shall be taxed only there, 28

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE--Cannot lawfully pay teacher for services performed after revocation of his certificate, unless by a vote of the district. 16

Office to become vacant upon neglect or refusal to provide a school within two weeks from the time appointed by the district for the commencement of the school, 30

Shall consist of one or three voters in the district. 32

Shall be chosen at annual meeting, 32

Shall hold office till another be be chosen, 32

Vacancy in office of, from any cause, shall be supplied by the selectmen till a new election. 35

Shall discharge the duties of clerk in his absence or neglect, in recording the proceedings of the district and certifying the same, 36

Shall keep the school house in good order at the expense of the district, 39

In case there be no school house, shall provide a suitable place for school at the expense of the district. 39

Shall see that fuel, furniture, and all appendages and things necessary for the advantage of the school be provided. 39

Shall appoint, and agree with teacher, and remove him when necessary. 39

Shall adopt all requsite measures for the inspection, examination and regulation of the school, and for the improvement of the scholars in learning, 39

When appointed by selectmen to fill vacancy arising from omission to support two months school for six months after a school meeting, shall sustain at least four months sufficient school in such district for each school year, at the expense of the district, and without previous vote of such district may assess the tax necessary for such purpose, and make out rate-bill therefor. 40

When voters cannot agree upon the location of school house, shall apply to the selectmen who may locate the same, 44

As soon as necessary after vote of district raising a tax, shall assess a tax on the list of the inhabitants of district, and on lands of non-residents, and make out rate-bill of same. 47

Shall draw orders on the Treasurer of district for all sums due therefrom, 48

Shall have the same authority to enforce the payment of district taxes, which the Treasurer of a town has to enforce payment of town taxes. 51

When it is his duty to warn school meeting, shall, if he neglect or refuse to warn such meeting after legal application therefor, forfeit twenty dollars for every delay of ten days, 58

Shall be liable in an action to the district, for any money he may pay to a teacher who has not obtained a certificate. 51

Of district having two or more schools, shall have power to examine the qualifications of scholars and designate what school they shall each attend, 64

Of district having two or more schools, may allow children of non-residents to attend the higher school and prescribe the terms therefor. 65

Of union district shall be composed of the chairmen of the prudential committees of the component districts, one being added by vote of district when the number of component districts is even, 73

Chairman of, is the member first elected. 73

Of union district, shall determine the ages and qualifications of the children of the associated districts who may attend the union school, 74

PUBLIC MONEY—Upon the division thereof, the orders therefor shall be made payable to the Treasurers of the several districts, 48

One-fourth of, shall, annually on the first Tuesday of April, be by the selectmen divided equally between the common school districts; and three-fourths thereof shall be divided between the common school districts, and union districts, if any in town, in proportion to the average daily attendance of the scholars of such district between the ages of four and twenty years, upon the schools of such districts, but no district shall receive any portion thereof, unless there shall have been kept therein during the preceding year, school for the term of two months with other moneys than those drawn from the town treasury, nor unless the moneys so drawn from town treasury shall have been faithfully expended in payment of teacher's wages, board, and fuel, and for no other purpose, 83

Distributive share of public money, belonging to any district shall be paid to the treasurer thereof, 83

How distributed to fractional district, see "fractional districts," 86

RATE BILL—Shall be made out by the prudential committee, as soon as necessary after the vote of the district raising the tax, 47

Shall have a warrant attached made out by some justice of the peace, directed to the collector, and requiring him to collect the tax within the time therein limited, and pay the same to the treasurer of the district, 47

REAL ESTATE—All real estate taxable for school purposes shall be taxed in the district where it is situated, 45

RECORD.—Of votes and proceedings of school meeting shall be kept by the clerk and certified by him when required, 37

REPORT OF SECRETARY—Shall annually be made to the Board at their annual session, 3

3500 copies shall be prepared annually, 8

Shall be ready for distribution on the first day of the session of the Legislature, 8

How distributed, 8

REVOCATION—Of certificate of teacher, may be made for incompetence to teach or to govern, or for setting an evil example, 16

Makes such certificates thereafter, null and void, 16

Shall be filed in the town clerk's office, 16

STATISTICS—Secretary's receipt for, must be exhibited to the auditor before the superintendent's account can be audited, 9

Forms for school registers shall be prepared and furnished by the secretary for procuring statistics, 109, [see "registers."

Each teacher and district clerk shall duly answer all questions in the registers in reference to, 110

Registers shall be filled out, and filed in March annually, 110

No portion of public money shall be distributed to any district that shall not duly furnish its statistics, 110

SELECTMEN—Shall appoint superintendent when from any cause a vacancy exists, 17

Shall organize districts and how, in organized town, 22

Of any organized town, may organize districts in an unorganized town and how, 23

Shall locate school house on application of the prudential committee when the voters cannot agree, 44

Of town or towns in which a union district is situated, may locate school house of union district on the failure of union district to agree, 72

Shall have charge and management of all real and personal estate appropriated as a fund for the use of schools in any town, unless other provision is made by law or by the grantor, and shall lease all lands and loan on annual interest all moneys with sufficient security, that are appropriated for the use of schools, and account annually for the same to the town, and may prosecute or defend all actions necessary for

the recovery or protection of such estate, 78

Shall, annually before the 1st of January, assess a tax of nine cents on the dollar of the Grand List, to be collected and paid to town treasurer before the 1st of March succeeding, 80

May omit the nine cent tax if the income appropriated to the use of schools after deducting one-half of the income of the United States deposit money shall equal the amount that would be raised by the nine cent tax, 81

Or may assess a tax sufficient, with such income, to equal the nine cent tax, 81

And may omit the nine cent tax if the money voted for the use of schools in the annual March meeting, together with the income appropriated to the use of schools, shall equal the amount of the nine cent tax, 82

Shall annually on the first Tuesday in April, divide the public money, one-fourth thereof equally between the common school districts, and three-fourths thereof between the common school and union districts, if any, in proportion to the average daily attendance of the scholars of such districts, between the ages of four and twenty years, upon the common schools of such districts, and shall pay over their respective shares to the treasurers of such districts, provided that no common or union district shall receive any portion of such money, unless there shall have been sustained during the year preceding, in such districts, schools for the term of two months, with other moneys than those drawn from the town treasury, nor unless the moneys drawn from the town treasury shall have been faithfully expended in the payment of teacher's wages, board and fuel, and for no other purpose, 83

Shall annually in the month of April, after making division of public money, leave a written statement of the amount distributed with the town clerk, 85

On neglect or refusal of selectmen of any town to assess, collect or appropriate the tax for the support of schools provided by law, such town shall forfeit and pay to the county in which it is situated, double the amount which the selectmen were required to raise by tax, 87

One-fourth of such penalty shall be for the use of the county, and the other three-fourths shall be paid to the selectmen for the use of schools in such town, 88

SECRETARY OF BOARD OF EDUCATION—Shall be appointed at the annual meeting of the board. 3

Shall keep a record of the doings of the Board, 3

Shall hold annually one Institute in each county, 3

Shall visit all parts of the State and deliver lectures, 3

Shall confer with superintendents, and furnish them blank forms for statistics, 3

Shall prepare and present an annual Report, 3

Shall make suggestions for the improvement of the schools, 3

Shall present information in regard to systems of instruction in other states and countries, 3

Compensation of, 6

Shall prescribe forms for a school register, arranged for keeping a record of daily attendance, and containing printed interrogatories addressed to teachers and district clerks for the procurement of statistical information, 109

Shall arrange the register so as to contain the information necessary to enable the selectmen to divide the public money to fractional districts, 109

Shall furnish annually in the month of January enough registers to each town clerk to supply each district with one register for each school in such district, for which he shall receive the receipts of the various town clerks, 109

Shall supply all deficiencies in registers when notified thereof, 109

Shall, on receipt of the statistics of the schools from the various superintendents, forward to them a certificate thereof, 112

SPECIAL MEETING OF BOARD—Shall be called by the Governor in his discretion, 2

SCHOOLS—Suggestions for the improve-

ment of, shall be made in the annual report of the secretary, 2
Shall be visited by the superintendent at least once in each year, 10
Each organized town in the state shall keep and support one or more scoools, provided with competent teachers, of good morals, in which shall be taught orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and special instruction shall be given in the geography, history, constitution and principles of government of the State of Vermont, 19
Fuel, furniture, and all appendages and things necessary for the advantage of, shall be provided by the prudential committee, 39
All requisite measures for the inspection, examination and regulation of, shall be adopted by the prudential committee, 39
SCHOOL DISTRICTS—See "Districts."
SCHOOL REGISTERS—Blank forms of, to be prescribed by the Secretary of Board, 109
Shall be arranged for keeping a record of the daily attendance of scholars, and contain printed interrogatories addressed to teachers and to district clerks, for the procurement of statistical information, and to enable the selectmen to distribute the public money to fractional districts, 109
Shall be furnished and forwarded to each town clerk in quantity sufficient to supply to each district clerk in every town, one for each school in the district, 109
Shall be received by the town clerk, and a receipt therefor immediately forwarded, 109
If not received by February 1st, the town clerk shall immediately notify the secretary, 109
Any deficiency of registers shall be immediately supplied by the secretary. 109
Of each district shall be procured by the district clerk in first week of March annually, 109
District clerk shall be responsible for the safe keeping of the register, 109
Of each school shall be procured by the teacher before he begins his school, 110
A true record therein shall be kept by each teacher, 110
All statistical inquiries therein addressed to teachers shall be answered correctly in accordance with the forms therein prescribed, by each teacher, and the register returned by him to the district clerk before he receives his wages, 110
All the requirements therein made of the district clerk to be complied with by him, and the correctness of his answers to all statistical inquiries verified by oath before a justice of the peace of the county where he resides, and the register be filed by the district clerk in the town clerk's office, in the month of March annually, 110
No portion of the public money to be distributed to any district whose register shall not be duly filled out and filed according to law, 110
SCHOOL FUND—All real and personal estate in any town appropriated for the use of schools, unless otherwise provided for by law, or by the grantor, shall be under the charge and management of the selectmen, who shall lease all lands and loan with good security on annual interest all moneys and render annually their account to the town, and who may prosecute and defend all necessary actions in regard thereto, 78
All leases, lands, mortgages and securities belonging to the school fund shall be deposited in the office of the treasurer of the town, and rents, interest, income and all moneys received on account of same, shall be paid into the town treasury, and a separate account shall be kept thereof. 79
A nine cent tax on the dollar of the grand list shall be assessed by the selectmen on the first of January annually, to be collected and paid to town treasurer before the first of March succeeding, 80
Trustees of shall be annually elected at the March meeting in each town, who shall take care of the fund and report in regard to its situation annually to the annual town meeting, 95

If town neglect or refuse to elect trustees as provided by law, the treasurer shall retain the portion of the public money belonging to such town, and annually before the first of March, pay the income thereof to the town treasurer, 96

Trustees of, shall give bonds before they enter on the discharge of their duties, 97

If trustees fail to give bonds, their offices shall become vacant, and may be filled by election at any legal meeting, 98

Trustees, when appointed, and having given bonds, shall receive from the treasurer and give receipts for such moneys as the town may be entitled to, 99

Each town shall be accountable to the state for the return of its proportion of the U. S. deposit money when required on the requisition of the U. S. or for a new apportionment, 100

Money deposited with towns to be loaned on sufficient security taken to the town, at 6 per cent. on interest, 101

Loans to be made for a term not exceeding one year, 102

May be loaned to town, 103

Income of, shall be appropriated to the support of schools in the respective towns, 104

Income of, shall be annually paid to the town treasury before the first day of March, who shall give credit therefor, and the same shall be distributed as other moneys by the selectmen to the various districts, 105

No portion of income of, shall be distributed to any district whose register shall not have been filled out and filed according to law, 110

SCHOOL YEAR—Begins on first day of April, and ends on the last day of March annually, 38

SCHOOL HOUSE—Location of, in fractional district shall determine the town to which it belongs, for purposes of visitation and returns, 25

Shall be kept in good order by the prudential committee at the expense of the district, 39

In case there be no school house, the prudential committee shall provide a suitable place at the expense of the district, 39

District may locate by vote of two thirds of legal voters present, and if the voters cannot agree, the selectmen may locate on the application of the prudential committee, 44

When located, and the owners of land refuse to convey the necessary land for school house, yard and outbuildings, or shall demand an unreasonable sum therefor, or when the owners of land refuse to convey land necessary for the enlargement of the school premises—method of procedure, 114—120

SUPERINTENDENTS—Of schools shall recomend only books from authentic list, 7

Shall be elected at March meeting, 9

Shall hold office during ensuing school year, 9

And when appointed by selectmen, during the remainder of the school year, 9

Compensation of, 9

Shall make a detailed account, 9

Shall make oath or affirmation to his account, 9

Shall present his account to the auditor of accounts, 9

His account shall be paid from the state treasury, 9

Can receive no order for his account till he exhibit the secretary's receipt for statistics, 9

Can only charge, in any visit for twice as many days as there are districts in town, 9

Shall visit all the common schools in town, at least once in each year, 10

Shall examine into the state of schools, and advise the teachers as to the government and instruction of them, 10

Shall adopt requisite measures for the examination, regulation and improvement of schools, 10

Shall file a copy of his account for services with the town, clerk on or before the day previous to March meeting, 10

Shall require of teachers full evidence of good moral character, 11

Shall examine teachers as to capacity to teach and govern schools, 11

When himself desiring to teach, shall obtain the certificate of the

superintendent of some adjoining town, 12
Shall give public notice of examinations of teachers, 13
Shall examine teachers publicly in some public place, in the months of April or May, and November, after due notice, 14
Shall invite citizens to attend the public examinations, 14
Shall examine teachers at public examinations, except in his discretion, and when applicants are prevented by sickness or other unavoidable circumstances from attending public examination, 14
Shall lodge in town clerk's office, on or before the first of February annually, a list of the names of teachers certified during the year with the dates of their certificates, 15
May revoke the certificate of teacher on finding him incompetent to teach or govern, or setting an evil example. 16
On revoking certificate, shall deliver a copy of such revocation to the prudential committee, and to the teacher, and file the same in the town clerk's office, 16
In case of vacancy, shall be appointed by the selectmen, 17
When appointed by selectmen, to have same legal powers as when regularly elected. 17
Shall, annually, on or before the tenth of April, make out and return to secretary of the board, the statistics of schools in each district in their respective towns, according to the forms prescribed by the secretary. 112

SCHOOL STUDIES—Each organized town in the state shall keep and support one or more schools, for the instruction of the young in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and good behavior; and special instruction shall be given in the geography and history, constitution and principles of government of the State of Vermont, 19

TAXES—The property of any person set to a district in an adjoining town shall be taxed in such district, and only there, 28
For support of school for four months in each year where the district offices are vacated by neglect to support at least two months school for six months after annual meeting, may be assessed by the prudential committee that shall be appointed by the selectmen. 40
On grand list may be laid by district, by vote in legal meeting legally warned, to erect or repair school house, to purchase or hire building for school house, to purchase land for school house to stand upon, and for yards, and for the erection and accommodation of the necessary outbuildings, and to support school as may be deemed necessary or expedient, 43
All real estate shall be taxed for school purposes in the district in which it is situated, 45
In the collection of district taxes, the collector may proceed in the same manner and with the same powers as may the town collector in collecting town taxes, 49
For the support of schools, shall be raised upon the grand list, provided that the district, by vote of a meeting legally warned, may defray expense of fuel and teacher's board by apportioning the same to the scholars that attend the school, or by assessing a tax upon the same, 50
But no taxes shall be assessed on account of scholars who shall not attend the school, 50
The payment of, may be enforced by prudential committee, who shall have the same authority therefor which the town treasurer has to enforce payment of town taxes, 51
Abatement of taxes assessed by district, to an amount not exceeding five per cent. of the tax bill, may be made by vote of two-thirds of the voters present at a meeting legally warned for that purpose, 52
A town tax of nine cents on the dollar of the grand list shall, annually previous to January first, be assessed by the selectmen, to be collected and paid to the town treasurer previous to the first of March succeeding. 80
If, in any town, the income appropriated to the use of schools, after deducting one-half of the income of the United States deposit money, shall amount to as much as would be rais-

ed by the nine cent tax, the selectmen need not assess it, or if such income be less, the selectmen shall assess only a tax sufficient, with such income to equal the amount of a nine cent tax, 81

If the amount raised in any town by tax at the annual meeting, together with the income appropriated to schools, shall, after the deduction required, equal the amount of the nine cent tax, the same may be omitted, 82

TAX BILLS—Shall be made payable to the treasurer of the district, 48

TEACHERS' INSTITUTES—See "Institutes."

TEACHERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS—To recommend only books that are in the authentic list, 7

To be examined by the superintendent and obtain certificate of qualification before opening school, 11

To be allowed the time spent in attending the Institute, not exceeding two days, 18

To be appointed and agreed with by prudential committee, and to be removed by him if necessary, 39

Contract for teaching, of one who fails to obtain the certificate of the town in which the district is located before he begins his school, according to Sec. 11, shall be null and void, 60

Shall procure the register of his school before he begins his school, 110

Shall keep a true record in the register, according to the form therein prescribed; shall answer all the statistical inquiries therein addressed to him, and return the register to the district clerk, before the receipt of his wages, 110

TREASURER OF STATE—To pay compensation of the board and secretary, on the certificate of the Governor, 6

Shall receive and give certificates of deposit for the United States deposit money, 91

Shall hold in trust the share of United States deposit money belonging to unorganized towns and gores, paying them the interest thereof annually, 92

Shall cause a true and just apportionment of deposit money to be made among the organized and unorganized towns and gores, according to the United States census of 1860, as soon as may be, and when, from time to time, a new census, under national or state law shall be taken, he shall make a new apportionment, 93

When, upon any apportionment, any town shall be found to have more than its just proportion of public moneys, the treasurer shall demand and recover of it the excess, and if any town have less than its just proportion, the treasurer shall make up the deficiency, 94

TREASURER OF DISTRICT—Shall be chosen at the annual meeting and hold office till another be chosen, 32

Shall make an annual report to the district of the amount of money received and disbursed by him, 32

Vacancy in office of, from any cause, shall be supplied by the selectmen till a new election, 35

All taxes shall, by the warrant, made payable to the treasurer of district, 48

The distributive share of the public money belonging to each district, shall be paid to its treasurer, 83

TRUSTEES OF PUBLIC MONEY—One or more, not exceeding three, shall be elected at the annual meeting in each town, who shall receive and take care of money deposited with the various towns, and annually report to March meeting the condition and situation of the deposit money received by them, 95

If any town neglect or refuse to elect such trustees, the treasurer shall retain the proportion of public money belonging to such town, and annually before the 1st of March, pay the income thereof to the treasurer of such town, 96

Shall give bonds before they enter upon their duties, 97

If they neglect to give bonds, their offices are vacated, 98

Such vacancy may be filled by election at any legal meeting, 98

Shall loan the public money on sufficient personal or mortgage security, taken to the town, at six per cent. annual interest, 101

All loans shall be made for a term not exceeding one year, at the expiration of which the money may be collected, or the loan extended, in the discretion of the trustees, 102

May loan the deposit money to their towns, provided the towns, at legal meetings, warned therefor, shall authorize their selectmen to borrow the same for the town. 103

All the income arising from the deposit money in any town, shall be annually appropriated to the use of schools in such town. 104

Shall annually before the first of March, pay over to the treasurer of their respective towns all the income received for interest on deposit money, and the treasurer shall give credit therefor in his account, and the same shall be distributed, as other moneys are by the selectmen to the various districts. 105

TOWNS—Shall elect a town superintendent of schools at their annual March meeting. 9

Each organized town shall keep and support one or more schools, provided with competent teachers, of good morals, for the instruction of the young in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history and constitution of the United States, and good behavior; and special instruction shall be given in the geography and history, constitution and principles of government of the state of Vermont. 19

Shall form additional districts when the inhabitants cannot be accommodated in one. 20

In town meeting notified therefor, may define, determine, limit, unite, divide and alter districts. 20

Shall number districts in regular order, and cause their boundaries and all changes therein to be recorded, 21

In organized town, districts to be organized by the selectmen. 22

In unorganized town, districts may be organized by the selectmen of any organized town. 23

Two or more town, by concurrent vote, may organize fractional districts from portions of each town. 24

May set any person, resident therein, to a district in an adjoining town by vote in town meeting. 27

Shall previously to January 1st annually, have assessed by the selectmen, a tax of nine cents on the dollar of the grand list, 80

And for neglect or refusal to make such assessment, shall forfeit twice the amount that would be raised by a tax of nine cents on the dollar of grand list, 87 and 88

If town fail duly to assess, collect, or appropriate the tax as required by law, for support of schools, it shall be indicted by the grand jury. 89

Shall, annually at annual meeting, elect one or more, not exceeding three trustees, who shall receive and take care of the deposit money of the town and annually render an account of its condition to the annual meeting, 95

If any town refuse or neglect to elect such trustees, the treasurer shall retain the town's proportion of deposit money and pay the income thereof annually to the town treasurer before the 1st of March. 96

Trustees of public money shall give bonds. 97

If trustees fail to give bonds their offices are vacated, and may be filled by election at any legal meeting, 98

Shall be accountable to the state for the return of their shares of the United States deposit money when required on requisition of the United States, or for a new apportionment, 100

May borrow the income of deposit money. 103

Shall appropriate for the support of schools all the income arising from the deposit money. 104

Unless the town have other school funds, the income of which is sufficient to support schools in all its districts for six months in each year. 106

Shall be liable to indictment for neglect or refusal to perform the duties required by law. 107

TOWN SCHOOL FUND—See "School Fund."

TOWN CLERK—To receive and file copy of superintendent's account. 10

To receive and give receipts for school registers. 109

On failure to receive registers by February 1st, he shall immediately notify the secretary thereof. 109

Shall, annually, on or before the first Tuesday in April deliver to the superintendent when called for, an abstract of the returns of the district clerk. 111

TOWN SUPERINTENDENTS—See "Superintendents."

UNITED STATES DEPOSIT MONEY—The treas-

urer of state shall receive and give certificate of deposit for any moneys of United States hereafter to be deposited with this state, 91

All such moneys belonging to the United States heretofore or hereafter received, shall be apportioned to and continue to be distributed and deposited with the towns organized and unorganized, and gores, in proportion to the number of inhabitants by the United States census of 1860, till another United States census be taken, 92

Treasurer shall hold in trust the shares of unorganized towns and gores, paying the interest annually, in proportion to the inhabitants thereof. 92

A true and just apportionment of deposit money, among the organized and unorganized towns and gores, shall be made by the treasurer of state as soon as may be after the United States census of 1860, and so from time to time after each new census by the United States, or by state law, 93

Upon each new apportionment of deposit money, the respective shares of the several towns shall be regulated, 94

One or more, not exceeding three, trustees of deposit money shall be annually elected in each town at March meeting, 95

If town neglect or refuse to elect trustees, the treasurer shall retain its portion and annually pay the interest thereof to the town treasurer, 96

Trustees of, to give bonds, 97

If trustees neglect to give bonds their offices become vacant, and may be filled at any legal meeting, 98

Each town shall be responsible to the state for the return of its share of United States deposit money when required on requisition of United States, or for a new apportionment, 100

The income of deposit money in each town shall be loaned on sufficient personal and mortgage security, to be taken to the town, at six per cent. annual interest. 101

Loans of, shall be made for a term not exceeding one year at a time. 102

Income of, may be loaned to the various towns under certain conditions, 103

Income of, in each town shall be annually appropriated to the support of schools, 104

Trustees shall annually before the 1st of March pay over to town treasurer all the income, and treasurer shall give credit therefor, and same shall be distributed as other moneys by the selectmen to the various districts, 105

Need not be so appropriated to the use of schools if the town has other school funds the interest of which shall be sufficient to support six months school in all the districts in town. 106

UNION DISTRICTS—Any two or more contiguous districts may unite and form a union district, for the support of a union school, by vote of two-thirds of the voters present at meetings legally warned in each district for that purpose, 66

As to that portion of the public money distributed for the attendance of scholars in the towns where they are located, union districts shall be accounted as common school districts and receive a proportionate share of public money under the regulations provided for common school districts, 67—74

Shall be bodies corporate like common school districts, and be called by such name as the district, at its first meeting shall determine. 68

First meeting of, shall be called at such time and place as the associate districts respectively, shall, by vote of same determine, 69

At first meeting shall choose a clerk with usual powers and duties, who shall hold office till another be chosen, 70

Annual meeting of, shall be held on the first Wednesday after the last Tuesday in March annually, 71

Officers of, shall be chosen at annual meeting, and shall hold office one year and till others be chosen. 71

May, at any legal meeting called therefor, raise money to erect, repair, rent or purchase building for school house and for land for same, and for purchasing fuel, furniture and other necessary articles, and in asses-

ing and collecting taxes therefor, like proceedings shall be had as in common school districts, 72

May determine the location of school house, and if the district do not determine its location, it may be referred to the selectmen of town or towns in which the uniting districts are situated, 72

May choose committee to carry the provisions made into effect, 72

Chairmen of the prudential committees of the uniting districts shall constitute the prudential committee of the union district, the union district adding one when the number of uniting districts is even, 73

Schools shall continue to be maintained in each of the uniting districts, after forming a union district, as if no provision for the formation of a union district were made, 74

At annual meeting shall choose moderator, collector, and treasurer, all with the same powers and rights, and duties that pertain to similar offices in common school districts, 75

Such officers shall hold office till others be chosen, 75

May raise money to pay teacher's wages at any legal meeting called therefor, 75

Any united district, or district forming part of union district, being dissatisfied, may withdraw therefrom by concurrent vote of two-thirds of the voters present at legal meetings, both of the union district and dissatisfied district, but the inhabitants of the dissatisfied district shall not vote at the meeting of the union district on the question of withdrawal, 76

Any contiguous district, by vote of two-thirds of legal voters thereof at a meeting thereof duly warned therefor, may join and become a member of a union district, if said union district by a majority of two-thirds of the voters present at a legal meeting warned therefor, shall vote to receive such contiguous district, 77

VACANCY—In the board or office of secretary may be filled by the board. 5

In the office of superintendent, from any cause to be filled by the selectmen, 17

In office of prudential committee on account of neglect or refusal to provide a school within two weeks from time appointed by district, may be filled by vote of legal school meeting warned therefor, 30

In office of clerk, collector, treasurer, or prudential committee from any cause, shall be supplied by the selectmen until a new election. 35

Will be caused in all the offices of the district by a neglect of six months after its annual meeting to support at least two months school, 40

And such vacancies shall, on application of two voters, be filled by the selectmen, 40

VOTER IN SCHOOL MEETING Any man shall be, who is of the age of 21 years, and shall reside and be liable to pay taxes in the district, 29

WARNING—For school meeting shall be issued by the clerk, or in his absence by the prudential committee, on application in writing of three or more legal voters in district, and posted in one or more of the most public places in the district, specifying the time, place and object of the meeting, at least seven and not more than twelve days before the time specified for the meeting, 41

For annual meeting may be issued by the clerk, or in his absence or neglect by the prudential committee without any application by voters, 42

WARRANT—On tax bill shall be made out by some justice of the peace of the county, and directed to the collector, requiring him to collect the tax therein, within the time therein limited, and pay the same to the treasurer of the district, 47

# AN ABSTRACT OF THE DECISIONS

OF THE

# SUPREME COURT OF VERMONT,

OF QUESTIONS ARISING IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHOOL LAWS OF THE STATE. ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY, BY TOPICS.

---

## COLLECTOR.

SEC. 1. The *Collector* of a school district, in order to justify, must not only show his rate-bill and warrant but also the organization of the district, the appointment of the committee, and the vote laying the tax. Unless the authority of the collector be shown, an assistant acting under direction of the collector will not be justified. (1 Vt.—p. 81.)

SEC. 2. The *Collector* of a school district tax is liable in trespass for seizing property by virtue of his warrant and rate-bill, if the district have no power to grant the tax; or if there be any illegality in voting it; although such warrant and rate-bill are regular on their face. (4 Vt.—p. 601).

SEC 3. A District *Collector* holds his office for one year, and until another is chosen in his stead. If the office is vacant, the district may appoint a new collector; but while he is collector, his duties cannot be assigned to another, nor any part of them; and, of course, the district can make no temporary appointment, or choose a collector to collect one tax, or the arreages. (11 Vt.—p. 618.)

SEC. 4. A *Collector* of a school district, distraining property to satisfy a tax, need not sell the property in his district; if sold in the town it is sufficient. (16 Vt.—p. 439).

A *Collector* having called upon one legally assessed, and being refused, is not bound to give further time. (9 Vt. 329, and 26 Vt. 381).

## CERTIFICATES TO TEACHERS.

SEC. 5. The Statute of 1827, requiring school teachers in the several towns to obtain certificates of their qualifications, was intended to make such certificates pre-requisites to the performance of any legally meritorious service in that capacity. (12 Vt.—p. 192).

SEC. 6. The plaintiff contracted to teach school for the defendants, and, on the morning of the day he commenced, and before commencing his school, he applied to the Superintendent for examination and certificate; but the examination was, at the request of the Superintendent, and upon his assurance that it would be as well, postponed until evening; at which time, after the commencement of his school, an examination was had and a certificate given; and after this the school proceeded for about seven weeks without objection, and without any new contract being made. *Held* that there was a substantial compliance with the statute requiring a certificate to be obtained before the commencement of the school, and that, in any view of the case, the certificate would be sufficient for the school kept after, if not for the same day it was given. 28 Vt.—p. 576.

SEC. 7. A certificate of school teacher's qualifications which is made out and signed by the Town Superintendent at its date, and is thereafter kept by him to be delivered whenever called for, will take effect from its date, though not delivered until long after; the act giving the certificate its effect and validity being the decision of the Superintendent respecting the teacher's qualifications. 29—433.

SEC. 8. The statute (Com. Stat. page 144, Sec. 12) makes it a *condition precedent* to any valid contract for teaching a common school, that the teacher obtain a certificate of qualification from the Town Superintendent; and a teacher, in order to recover his wages of a school district, must first show a compliance with this requirement. (Welch & Brown *v* Vose & Tr., School District.) 30—586.

The mere fact that there was ill feeling between the Town Superintendent and the teacher, is no excuse for not obtaining such certificate. 29—433.

## EDUCATION.

A good common school education is now fully recognized as one of the necessaries for an infant. (Royce, J., 16 Vt. 683.)

## EVIDENCE.

SEC. 9. The true time of the execution of a written instrument, which has a false date, may be shown by parol. 27—281.

SEC. 10. That a written instrument, which purports to be a written certificate, never had any legal existence, or binding force as such, may be shown by parol. 27—281.

SEC. 11. The certificate given to a teacher by a Superintendent of Common Schools, and the effect to which it would otherwise be entitled, may be impeached by parol testimony, showing that it was given when the teacher was not entitled to it, under an assurance that no legal use should be made of it. 27—281.

SEC. 12. The organization and existence of a school district, and that a certain person was its Prudential Committee, may be proved by reputation, by the fact that such district has exercised corporate

power as a district, and that such person acted as a Prudential Committee, without the production of the records, where the questions arise collaterally, and in proceedings to which the district is, in no way, a party. 27—755.

SEC. 13. Where by the pleadings it is admitted that certain persons were, at a particular time, the Prudential Committee of a school district, testimony to show they were not, is inadmissible; but testimony showing the identity of particular persons with those named in the pleadings, is proper. 29—188.

## GRANT.

A Legislative grant for the purpose of education cannot afterwards be controlled by the Legislature. 11 Vt. 632.

## GRAND LIST.

The Grand List of a town does not become the legal basis of taxation until the majority of the Listers have signed and sworn to a certificate thereon, as required by law. 32 Vt. 285.

## OFFICERS OF DISTRICT.

SEC. 14. School district officers, elected at an annual meeting of the district, will hold their offices until others are elected at another annual meeting to supersede them; and it makes no difference whether the second is a few more or a few days less, than one year from the time the first meeting was held. 23—416; 32 Vt.

SEC. 15. It is not necessary that the Moderator chosen at the annual school meeting should preside at all subsequent meetings of the district during the year; the proceedings will be valid if the district should, at a subsequent meeting, elect a moderator to preside over that meeting. 26—503.

SEC. 16. A public officer is entitled to reasonable intendment in his favor, the same as are applied to the proceedings of courts. 26—503.

## PLEADING.

SEC. 17. In an indictment against a town for the neglect of the Selectmen to assess the three cent school tax, under the act of 1827, the duty of the Selectmen, and their neglect should be stated, and also that there was no legal excuse for such neglect, and that the town had no funds equal to any part of the sum to be raised, if the neglect relied on is that the Selectmen neglected to raise the whole tax. 13—565.

SEC. 18. In an action of trespass, where the declaration contains several counts, a plea which commences and concludes in bar of the action generally, and the obvious and natural import of the language of which should be understood in a plural and distributive sense, as

applying to the different occasions on which the trespasses are charged, must be taken as a plea to the whole declaration.

A plea to the whole declaration, to be sufficient, must appear to contain an answer to all that is alleged as the direct ground and gist of the action, and such answer must be valid and sufficient in law.

Matter of aggravation, correctly understood, does not consist in acts of the same kind and description as those constituting the gist of the action, but is something done by the defendant, on the occasion of committing the trespass, which is to some extent, of a different legal character from the principal act complained of.

But a declaration, which charges the defendant with having struck the plaintiff a great many violent blows with a club, and with a raw hide, and with his fist, and with having, with great violence, shaken the plaintiff, and pulled him about, and with having thrown down the plaintiff and there harshly and brutally kicked him and struck him other violent blows, and with having wounded him, and torn his clothes, exhibits a mere succession of acts of direct trespass, all remediable by an action of the same class, and each requiring some complete justification, or excuse, in the plea.

But a plea to such declaration, which professes to answer the "assaulting, beating, and ill-treating" using the explanatory words "as in the declaration mentioned," will be considered as co-extensive with the alleged cause of action.

But it was held, that a plea to a declaration alleging such acts of trespass, which avers merely that the defendant was a school master and the plaintiff was his scholar, and that the plaintiff was insolent and refused to obey the reasonable commands of the defendant, and thereupon the defendant moderately chastised him, and which set forth no acts on the part of the plaintiff requiring excessive severity on the part of the defendant, such as resistance by the plaintiff, did not disclose a sufficient justification in law, for the acts alleged in the declaration. *Hathaway vs. Rice.* 19—112.

SEC. 19. The Supreme Court will not, on exceptions, examine a question not decided by the County Court. 20—495.

SEC. 20. An averment that the listers put the plaintiff's real estate in the Grand List, at a certain sum, is a sufficiently direct and positive averment that he had a Grand List to that amount, for his real estate. 27—221.

SEC. 21. If a material averment is argumentatively made, it can only be taken advantage of by special demurrer. 31—337.

SEC. 22. If a referee find and report the legal existence of a school district merely from parol testimony "that it had been considered as a district for forty years," although such testimony is very indefinite, and open to just criticism on that account, still it is not so fatally defective as to justify a reversal of the referee's report on that ground. 30—273.

## PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE.

SEC. 23. Where a school district, at their annual meeting, have decided, that they will appoint but one prudential committee, and have appointed him; they cannot at a subsequent meeting during the year, warned for that purpose, determine that the committee shall consist of three persons, and proceed to appoint two additional members of the committee. They cannot again act upon the subject, during the year, unless a vacancy shall have occurred by the death, resignation, removal, or disability of the committee first appointed. 20—487 & 23—416.

SEC. 24. The Prudential Committee refusing to do a particular act, in his official duty, in good faith, not believing it to be a duty, will not create a vacancy in the office; but if a new district should be erected, and the Prudential Committee of the old district is included within the limits of such new district, it will create a vacancy in the office. 26—503, 15—657.

The Prudential Committee of a school district have no authority, without a vote of the district to that effect, to employ counsel in the name of the district to defend a suit against an officer of the district, in which the district may be interested.

The fact that the pendency of such a suit, and even the employment of an attorney by the Prudential Committee, without authority, to defend it, are known to the officers of the district, and to the voters therein generally, has no legal tendency to show, on the part of the district, any acquiescence in, or adoption of, the employment of the attorney. 30—154.

SEC. 25. The Prudential Committee man of a school district is its general official agent, and the proper person to see that means are provided to pay the school teacher hired by him, and if, before the close of the school term, and shortly before the service of trustee process on the district as Trustee of the teacher, he, in good faith, pays the teacher his wages, although without the direction or knowledge of the district, and out of his own private funds, there being no funds in the district treasury at the time, the district may rely on such payment as against the teacher, or in its discharge as his Trustee. 33 Vt. 77.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT.

SEC. 26. The existence and organization of a school district may be proved by reputation where its organization does not appear of record. All that is necessary in such cases is to show that there is a district, long known and recognized as such. 6—389.

SEC. 27. *Districts* are required by statute to be defined by geographical limits and should be described by territorial boundaries, and not by the names of the inhabitants. 8—402.

SEC. 28. *Districts*, Limits of, must be defined by the vote of the

town, or the vote must contain such directions as will render its limits capable of being definitely ascertained. 10—480.

SEC. 29. *District.* When a school district has been organized, in fact, for a number of years, and has chosen its officers from time to time, the Selectmen cannot organize it again, as an unorganized district, because doubts are entertained of the regularity of the former organization. 11—607.

SEC. 30. After an acquiescence of all concerned, for more than fifteen years in the proceedings of school districts in a town, as such, the regular division of the town into such districts, and the regular organization of such districts will be presumed.

The fact of the existence and continued operation of a school district, for the purpose of raising a presumption of its legal organization, may be shown by witnesses upon the stand, where the loss of the records of the district is shown, and it may be doubted whether such proof would not be sufficient for that purpose, without proof of the loss of the records.

A school district, after the suspension of all its functions for ten years, may properly organize anew, when required so to do by the town ; and that without being, by a vote of the town, set off anew and constituted a school district. 16—439.

SEC. 31. A town may by vote annex a portion of its inhabitants to a district in an adjoining town, which shall consent to receive them, but although the effect of this is to extend the corporate jurisdiction of such district, so as to embrace the persons thus annexed, together with the property subject to taxation belonging to them in the particular territory inhabited by them, yet the *territory* itself is not annexed to the district, as it is in case where a district is formed from territory belonging to the town, by a concurrent vote of both towns.

And the arrangement between a town and a district in an adjoining town, by which the town, by vote, annexes some of its inhabitants to such district, and the district consents to receive them, is not to be regarded as a compact, absolutely and perpetually binding, but as a mere license and temporary consent on both sides, and therefore subject to be revoked or cancelled by either party.

And the town, in such case, may at any time, by vote, resume its jurisdiction over its citizens, and dissolve their connection with the district, without the intervention of a board of three justices of the peace, as is required when a district has been formed from territory in two towns, by a concurrent vote of both towns. 21—402.

SEC. 32. The plaintiffs proposed to sell to defendants, who were a school district, certain land, upon which a school house was to be erected, with the restriction, that the front of the school house, when erected, should be upon a line with the front of a certain meeting house, and that no building should be erected upon the land in front of the school house and meeting house.

This proposition was made in school meeting, and the districts

thereupon voted to instruct their Prudential Committee to purchase the land. The purchase was made accordingly ; and in the deed, executed by the plaintiffs to the defendants, the restriction was expressed to be that no erections should be made upon said land between the school house and the highway. In the declaration in an action of assumpsit brought by the plaintiffs to recover the price, which the defendants agreed to pay for the land, this restriction was expressed in the words used in the deed. Held that there was no variance between the contract declared upon and that proved.

At the time the proposal was made for the sale to the district, the land had been unenclosed for some years, and open to the public, and one restriction imposed by the plaintiffs in their proposal, was that the land should be kept open.

In the deed it was expressed that the land should remain as a public common. And in the declaration, the restriction was expressed as in the deed. Held, that this difference constituted no objection to the plaintiff's recovery, that the deed only imposed upon the district the obligation to keep the land free as it then was.

Held, also, that the plaintiffs in such suit were properly allowed by the County Court, to prove the terms upon which they so offered to sell the land to the district.

And, where it appeared, in such case, that the selectmen of the town, in pursuance of a vote of the district, had located the school upon the land in question, and that the district voted "to instruct the Prudential Committee to purchase the land designated by the selectmen for the location of a school house, at the price of $100," and that the Prudential Committee had purchased the land at the special price, but the district should hold the land for the purpose of erecting a school house thereon, and that the school house should be so located, that the front should be upon a line with the front of a meeting house standing near, and that no erection should be placed upon the land, between the school house and the highway, but the land should remain as a public common, it was held, that these restrictions did not defeat or impair the object of the purchase, and that the Prudential Committee had power to accept a deed containing such restrictions, and that the plaintiffs might recover from the district the price of the land under a general count for land sold.

And such deed being executed with covenants of warranty, it was held no defence to such action that there was a defect in the plantiff's title to the land. 22—309.

SEC. 33. Where, after organization into school districts, a town is divided and incorporated into two distinct towns, and by such division, a school district is divided, part falling in the old and part in the new town, neither portion of such district, so severed, can be considered as an entire and several district or can act as such, legally. 23—421.

SEC. 34. When a school district has been formed from territory in

two towns, either by concurrent vote of the towns, or by act of the legislature previous to the power to constitute such districts being conferred upon towns, *quære* whether one of the towns has authority to alter the limits of such district by setting the individuals, within such town, from such district to another district within the town.

But if the exercise of such authority by the town be inconsistent with the right of such district, such right may be waived by vote of the district; and if the district consent by vote, that an individual within its limits may unite with some other district, and such individual be set, by vote of the town, to another district, the union district cannot afterwards assess a tax against such individual. 23—626.

SEC. 35. The geographical limits of a school district must be defined by the inhabitants of the town, at a legal meeting warned for that purpose, and unless so defined the survey should not be recorded.

And when a town simply authorized a division of a school district, without defining the boundaries of the new district, it was held in sufficient to show a legal division and organization of the new district, though the district voted to divide.

But, where a division was in fact made and recorded, and the town afterwards recognized or ratified the same, it was held, that this was sufficient to render the division legal and binding upon the inhabitants of the town and district. 25—311.

SEC. 36. The plaintiff built a school house for the defendants, under the employment, upon a *quantum meruit*, of one member only of their building committee, who, it was claimed, could not act without the concurrence of his associates, and that the committee could not bind the district to an amount exceeding $100. The school house was worth $200, and after its completion, the defendants voted to accept it, and voted to pay the plaintiff $105. Therefore *Held*, that the acceptance was absolute, and amounted to a ratification of the proceedings of the committee-man, and bound the defendants to pay the plaintiff what the school house was worth. 28—8.

An article in the warning for a town meeting was "to see if "the voters present would vote to set off" the plaintiff and six other persons named, "and their real estate from school district No. 5, the same to constitute a new district." Held that this was a sufficiently definite description of the real estate proposed to be set off, to bring the subject within the scope of the action of the town meeting; and that, the town having at such meeting voted "to constitute a new school district agreeably to such article in the warning, the plaintiff and his real estate were legally set to such new district.

And if an article in the warning for a town meeting be to see if the town will divide a school district and annex a portion of it to one district, and the remainder to another, the town may, at such meeting, legally set the whole district, which is proposed to be divided to either of the districts named in the warning. 33 Vt. 219.

## SCHOOL MEETINGS.

SEC. 37. A *School meeting* should have seven days' notice—a notice on the first day of the month for a meeting to be held on the seventh, is not sufficient, and the warrant for such meeting must specify the business to be done.

*School meetings.* Proceedings of school meetings rendered void by omissions and neglects as above. 14—300.

SEC. 38. It is not necessary to state in the warning of the school meeting for such new organization (or of other school meetings) nor in the record, that such meeting was warned upon the application of the required number of free holders; the proceedings in this respect will be presumed regular. 16—439.

SEC. 39. A school meeting, warned without naming in the warning the hour of the meeting, is irregular, and its proceedings are void, and the defect is not cured by an adjournment to another day, naming the hour of that day.

A vote of the district, at such meeting, to raise a tax, will not justify the collector in an action of trespass against him for taking property to satisfy the same. 16—439.

SEC. 40 It is necessary that the warning for a meeting of a school district should be recorded by the District Clerk. (17 Vt. 337).

The records of a school district should not be amended on the trial of a cause. 11 Vt. 618.

If it do not appear from the record of the warning, in such case, that the hour of the day for the meeting was specified in the warning, the defect cannot be supplied by parol evidence that, in the original warning, the hour for the meeting was named. 17—337.

SEC. 41. A collector, justifying under his warrant and rate-bill, cannot supply defects in the record, by parol evidence that all the legal voters were present at such meeting and voted upon the question of raising the tax. 17—337.

SEC. 42. Any fact that should be matter of record, should be proved by the record. 17—337.

SEC. 43. If a meeting of a school district be duly warned by the Clerk, without any applicaton to him in writing for that purpose, and a meeting be held pursuant to the warning, such meeting will be legal and valid.

That provision of the statute which makes it the duty of the Clerk to warn a meeting of the district upon a written application to him for that purpose, was intended to act compulsorily upon the Clerk, and not to withhold from him the power of calling meetings without such application.

But, if it was essential, that such application in writing should have been made, the court would presume that it was made. 20—487; 23—416.

SEC. 44. In computing the length of time, during which notice of a meeting of a school district was given, the same rule will be ap-

plied as in the case of service of process; either the day on which the notice was posted, or the day on which the meeting was held, will be counted. 20—487.

SEC. 45. The court will not grant a writ of *Mandamus*, requiring the clerk of a school district to amend his records, when it appeared that he had ceased to be clerk, and has removed without the jurisdiction of the court. 20—487.

SEC. 46. When a district does not own land, on which to erect a school house, and one article in the warning of a meeting is, "To "see what measures the district will take in relation to building a "school house," it is competent for the district, at such meeting, to vote to purchase land for that purpose. 20—487; 22—309.

SEC. 47. An article in the warning of a school meeting to see whether the district will have a school the ensuing winter, and to see what method the district will take to pay the expense of said school, is sufficient to authorize the district to vote a tax upon the Grand List to defray the expense of the school.

And a vote, at a meeting so warned, "to pay the expense of the "school with money drawn from the town, and the residue, if any, "on the Grand List of the district," will authorize the committee to make a rate-bill upon the Grand List of the district, for a sum sufficient to pay the excess of the expense of the school above the amount raised from the town, whenever the amount shall be ascertained.

And it will not affect the validity of the rate-bill, that it is made for an amount exceeding, by some small sum, the actual amount of the expense of the school above the amount received from the town. 23—416.

The Clerk of a town or other municipal corporation while in office, and having the custody of the records, may generally make them conformable to the facts by altering or amending them, and this, although he may have been out of office, but is again restored.

But such alterations or amendments should ordinarily be made by original documents or minutes, and not upon the testimony of third persons, or upon the clerk's own recollection, unless in very obvious cases of omission or error. 27 Vt. 207

## SCHOOL HOUSE.

SEC. 48. By implication, the Prudential Committee of the school district must have the right to occupy the school house, when the school is in operation; but neither the statute, nor the implications growing out of the general powers and duties of the Prudential Committee, give him the exclusive control of the school house, in his district; that power must be in the district. 24—528.

When a school district employed the plaintiff to superintend the repairs of a school house, they knowing his habits and ability in this

respect, held, that plaintiff was entitled to recover for the work what it was worth to him to do it. 24 Vt. 297.

SEC. 49 When a district, at a meeting for that purpose, voted to have a private school in the school house, and nothing appeared, but that, if it had been permitted to proceed, it would have answered all the purposes of a public school, and been open to all the children in the district, and taught all the branches of common school instruction enumerated in the statute, and no others; under these circumstances it was held that there was nothing inconsistent with the right of the district, in allowing the school to continue there *for the time being merely;* but that the district clearly could not confer any exclusive right to the possession of the school house, for any definite time, upon any one.

It was also held, that the privilege, which was conferred upon the plaintiffs, was of a legally beneficial character, and the defendants for causelessly and wantonly disturbing them in the enjoyment of the same, are liable to an action, and that *case* is the appropriate remedy.

The inhabitants of the school district have no estate in any form, in the property belonging to the district, and the district alone can bring *trespass, quare clausum fregit.* 24—528.

The taking of land for a location of a district school house is for a public use, and therefore the act of 1857, providing for taking land *in invitum* for that purpose, is not unconstitutional.

Under that act the quantity of land allowed to be taken is not limited to the mere *site* of the school house, but it also includes such adjacent land for the purpose of a yard, &c., as the selectmen or commissioners may think requisite. 33 Vt. 271.

## TAXES.

SEC. 50. A *district* cannot vote a tax on a list which is not to be completed until after thirty days from voting the tax.

A *tax* voted in May, on a list not to be completed till December following, and which thus could not be assessed within thirty days after voting the tax, as required by statute, held to be illegal, with all subsequent proceedings to enforce its collection.

A *tax* is not necessarily void, because it is not assessed within thirty days after it is voted. 4—601.

Since the above decision, it has been enacted that "the Grand List to be completed on the fifteenth day of May for the assessment of town and highway taxes, shall be the list on which all school district and village taxes, voted on the first day of March, or at any time thereafter, within one year, shall be assessed. Sec. 1 of 66 of 1854.

SEC. 51. Under the school act of Nov., 1827, and the explanatory act of 1833, the voters in any school district may assess a tax for the support of a school, upon such scholars only, as actually attend the

school, and the term "otherwise," in the former act, is to be interpreted by the practice that obtained under the original school act of 1797. 12—473.

SEC. 52. The limitation to a maximum amount of the sum to be raised in a school district, imparts sufficient certainty; and the expenses, to be incurred within the limit prescribed, is a matter properly intrusted to the Prudential Committee. 12—473.

SEC. 53. The fact that a school district mistook their rights, and the location of their school house proved to be illegal, and upon indictment, was adjudged a nuisance, will not affect the validity of a tax raised to build the school house. 26—503.

SEC. 54. A vote by a school district, that a tax be raised to pay the expenses of the repairs of their school house, is sufficient and valid, without a limitation as to the amount of the tax, or its rate per cent. 27—221.

SEC. 55. When the statute requires the real estate situated in a school district to be assessed for the district taxes, but provides for no separate valuation of that portion of an individual's real estate which is situated in the district, it is competent for the Prudential Committee to make the assessment upon such a proportion of the general valuation of all the individual's real estate, in the town, as the value of his real estate in the district bears to that of the whole. 27—221.

SEC. 56. A school district may sustain an action against the listers, if they designate any part of the property, which belongs to and is taxable in their district, as belonging to another school district, so that the plaintiff district is deprived of the benefit of the list upon that property in the assessment of their taxes.

If such a designation has been wrongfully made, the listers will be liable, if they refuse or neglect to correct it, when requested by a special committee of the injured district, though no request be made by the Prudential Committee. 27—650.

SEC. 57. The appraisals and assessments which listers are commissioned to make (as also whenever it is the evident intention of the law that they shall act solely upon their own judgment and discretion) are of a judicial character, and they incur no personal responsibility, when not actuated by malice.

But, in regard to the other duties enjoined upon the listers, their acts, for the most part, if not universally, are ministerial.

The duty of the listers, under the act of 1847, "to set in the list "the appraised value of all real and personal estate in each school "district severally," was, in its character, wholly ministerial. 24—9.

SEC. 58. And, when the members of a firm carried on business in school district No. 1, and their personal property, on the 1st day of April, 1848, was in said district, except what they had sent abroad for sale, it was held that the statute does not authorize an ideal separation of their joint property, so as to set a portion of the property

in school district No. 2, where one of the partners resided ; but the property should be designated as being in school district No. 1, where a portion was actually situated—where the partnership business was carried on, and where a majority of the partners actually resided.

And if the firm suffer any injury or damage from the listers setting their property, or a part thereof, in some other school district, they will be liable, and the firm can sustain an action against them. 24—9.

SEC. 59. The Grand List which by the act of 1842 (com. stat., ch. 80, sec. 50,) was required to be completed and returned to the Town Clerk's office on or before the first Monday in September, became and was, *on* that day, the existing Grand List upon which a tax, voted on that day, was required to be assessed.

A school district tax on that list could be voted on the first Monday of December by a school district meeting which had been adjourned to that day from a previous one.

Under the law as it was in 1844, it was the duty of the Prudential Committee of a school district, in assessing a tax, to assess all the lands situated in the district, which were set in the Grand List of the town, though they were not designated in the list of the district, and to exclude from their assessment such lands as were not in the district, though they were incorrectly designated as being there. But could not include in their assessment lands within the district which were wholly omitted in the list. 29—188.

SEC. 60. Rule for the apportionment of the appraised value of lands which were situated partly within and partly without the district. 29—188.

SEC. 61. Since the act of 1854 (Laws of 1854 p. 44) authorizing school districts to elect a treasurer, it is proper that the warrant for the collection of a school district tax should require the money, when collected, to be paid to that officer, if one has been elected, and not to the Prudential Committee.

If an inhabitant of a school district has no list in his district, his name need not appear in the rate-bill of a tax laid by such district. 30—273.

SEC. 62. A person resident in a school district on the 1st day of April, who is assessed as the owner of personal estate, and whose list is designated by the listers as belonging to such district, is liable to pay taxes in such district, while such list continues in force, though he has removed from the district. 31—337.

A person resident in a school district on the 1st of April, and properly listed there, remains subject to taxation therein upon such list while it remains in force, notwithstanding he has subsequently removed from the district.

The neglect to comply with the provision of the statute requiring the warrant for the collection of a school tax to specify a limited time within which the tax is to be collected, is not a defect of which

a person taxed can take advantage; and though it may render the warrant informal and defective as between the district and the collector, it does not invalidate the action taken by the latter to collect the tax. 32. Vt.

## TEACHERS.

Sec. 63. The right of a schoolmaster to correct his scholar has always been practically and judicially sanctioned. But it rests upon similar ground as the right to correct a child or servant, and the chastisment must not exceed the limits of a moderate correction. And though courts are bound, with a view to the maintenance of necessary order and decorum in schools, to look with all reasonable indulgence upon the exercise of this right, yet, whenever the correction, as confessed by the pleadings, or as proved on trial, shall appear to have been clearly excessive and cruel, it must be adjudged illegal. 19—102.

Sec. 64. In an action brought by a school teacher vs. a school district, to recover pay for having taught the district school, evidence, that a majority of the voters in the district were dissatisfied with the plaintiff, and that the plaintiff and the Prudential Committee, who employed the plaintiff, knew this at the time the plaintiff was employed, is inadmissible. 20—487.

Sec. 65. The power of employing and dismissing teachers in school districts, is, by law, vested in the Prudential Committee; and the district have no power over the subject. A teacher, who has been employed by the Prudential Committee to teach the school, is entitled to all the benefit of the contract, unless he have relinquished it, or been guilty of some dereliction of duty, or failure to perform his part of the contract. The district have no power, by vote, to annul the contract. 20—487.

Sec. 66. Where a teacher contracted to instruct a district school during a specified time, and, during the time, he was absent ten days at one time, without the previous consent of the Prudential Committee, and he closed the school a few days before the time agreed upon, and this also without the previous consent of the Prudential Committee, but it appeared that he had sufficient reason, in both instances, for so doing, and that the Prudential Committee, when the cause was made known to him, was entirely satisfied, it was held that the teacher was entitled to recover pay for the time during which he actually taught, at the same rate of compensation agreed upon for the entire time. 20—487.

Sec. 67. Nor can the committee dismiss a teacher, except for good and sufficient cause. 20—487.

Sec. 68. When the teacher of a district school, without the use of any fraudulent or improper means, has obtained a certificate of his qualifications, in due form, from the Superintendent of Common Schools, for the town, it is no defence to an action, brought by the

teacher against the district, to recover his wages, that the certificate was granted without any examination having been in fact made by the Town Superintendent. 20—495.

SEC. 69. The statute requires every teacher to obtain a certificate of his qualifications before he opens his school; and the obtaining of such certificate is a *pre-requisite* to a right of action for his services as teacher.

And the fact that the teacher was a minor, and that the Superintendentent was sick and deceased, and no Superintendent was appointed to fill the vacancy till after his school commenced, cannot supersede the statute.

And the Prudential Committee have no power to waive the requirements of the statute, nor can the Prudential Committee bind the district, by a contract with the teacher, that he may teach the school without procuring a certificate of his qualifications. 26—115.

SEC. 70. The teacher of a private school has the right to require a scholar, who is guilty of insubordination and misconduct, to leave the school; and if the scholar refuse to do so, upon being requested, a third person will upon the request of the teacher, be justified, as the servant and agent of the teacher, in using the necessary force for removing him. 27—755.

SEC. 71. The fact that scholars and parents are dissatisfied with a school teacher, is no sufficient cause for dismissing him before the expiration of the time for which he has been employed. Evidence to show such dissatisfaction is, therefore, inadmissible in an action to recover damages on account of such a dismissal. To justify it, actual incapacity or unfaithfulness must be shown. 28—576.

SEC. 72. A school teacher who contracts to teach for a definite term and leaves before the term is finished, without excuse, cannot recover anything for his part performance. 29—217.

SEC. 73. Though a schoolmaster has in general no right to punish a pupil for misconduct committed after the dismissal of school for the day, and the return of the pupil to his home, yet he may, on the pupil's return to school, punish him for any misbehavior, though committed out of school, which has a direct and immediate tendency to injure the school and to subvert the master's authority.

A schoolmaster is not relieved from liability in damages for the punishment of a scholar which is clearly excessive and unnecessary, by the fact that he acted in good faith and without malice, hon-

estly thinking that the punishment was necessary both for the discipline of the school and the welfare of the scholar.

But if there is any reasonable doubt that the punishment was excessive, the master should have the benefit of it.

Upon the question whether the punishment of a pupil by his master was excessive or not, evidence that the ordinary management of the latter as a teacher was mild and moderate is not admissible.

It *seems*, however, that such evidence would be admissible in regard to the question whether the punishment was wanton and malicious.

Whether a rawhide is a proper instrument of punishment of a pupil by his master is for the jury to decide, in consideration of all the circumstances of the case.

Upon the question whether a school teacher acted maliciously in the punishment of a scholar, it is competent for the former to show that in other schools in the vicinity the same instrument of punishment is used as that resorted to by him.

In trespass against a school master for the punishment of a scholar on account of misconduct out of school, it was held that it was competent evidence against the charge that the punishment was excessive, to show that at a former trial of the same case, no claim of that kind was made, but that the plaintiff then only claimed that the master had no right to punish for such misconduct. 32 Vt. 114.

## SCHOOLS.

SEC. 74. A requirement by the teacher of a district school, that the scholars in Grammar shall write English compositions, is a reasonable one; and if such scholar, in the absence of any request from his parents that he may be excused from so doing, refuse to comply with such a requirement, he may be expelled from school on that account.

It seems also that such requirement would be reasonable and proper in the case of the scholars in a majority of the studies prescribed for district schools by the statute. 32 Vt. 225.

## TOWN SUPERINTENDENT.

SEC. 75. If Superintendent neglects, before granting certificate, to make such examination of the applicant as is necessary to afford reasonable evidence of possessing requisite qualifications, he is undoubtedly guilty of a dereliction of duty. 20—495

## U. S. DEPOSIT MONEY.

SEC. 76. *U. S. Deposit Money.* The interest of the public moneys of the United States, which by the act of 1836, is appropriated to the support of common schools, is not to be taken as a part of the proceeds of the school fund, within the purview of the proviso to the 9th section of the act of 1827, entitled "An act to provide for the support of common schools'—and to go so far as a relief against the three cent tax required by law. 12—127.

# INDEX TO THE ABSTRACT.

## REFERENCES TO SECTIONS REFER TO SECTIONS OF THE FOREGOING ABSTRACT


CERTIFICATES

Of teachers' qualifications are pre-requisite to the performance of any legally meritorious service by them in that capacity. Sec. 5. 12 Vt. 192. See also sec. 8. 29 Vt. 433.

" For which application was made in the morning of first day of school but on the motion of Superintendent was not granted till evening of the same day, indicates substantial compliance with the law, and at all events avails for one year subsequent to that day. Sec. 6. 28 Vt. 576.

" Made out and signed, though not then delivered, will take effect from this date. Sec. 7. 29 Vt. 433.

" Non reception of, will not be excused by existence of ill feeling between Superintendent and Teacher. Sec. 8. 29 Vt. 433.

" Apparently legal, may be shown by parol never to have had any legal existence or binding force as such. Sec. 10. 27 Vt. 281.

" Given to teacher not entitled thereto, under his assurance that no legal use should be made of it, may be impeached by parol. Sec. 11. 27 Vt. 281.

" When obtained without fraudulent or improper means, will not be invalidated by the fact that no actual examination was made. Sec. 68. 20 Vt. 495.

" Must be obtained by the teacher before he opens his school, and the minority of the teacher, or the absence or sickness of the Superintendent, or a vacancy in the office, will not supersede the statute; nor can the Prudential Committee waive the requirements of law, or bind the district by a contract with the teacher that he may teach the school without procuring a certificate. Sec. 69. 26 Vt. 116.

COLLECTOR

In order to justify, must show rate bill and warrant, and organization of District, and appointment of Committee, and the vote laying the tax. Sec. 1. 1 Vt. 81.

" Is liable in trespass for seizing property if the tax is illegal or illegally voted, although his rate bill and warrant be regular. Sec. 2. 4 Vt. 601.

" Holds his office for one year and until another be chosen, and while he is collector no other can be chosen, even temporarily, nor can his duties, in part or in whole be assigned Sec. 3. 11 Vt. 618.

" Pro tempore. There can be no such officer. Sec. 3. 11 Vt. 618.

" Distraining property, need not sell it in his district; if sold in town it is sufficient. Sec. 4. 16 Vt. 439.

" And having demanded taxes legally assessed, being refused, need not give further time. 9 Vt. 329 & 26—381.

" In justifying, cannot supply defects in the record by parol evidence that all the legal voters were present and voted at the meeting when a tax was laid. Sec. 41. 17 Vt. 337.

**COMPOSITION**

**An exercise in composition, in connection with Grammar and other studies, may be required by the teacher, with the assent of the Prudential Committee, and may be enforced. Sec. 74. 32 Vt. 225.**

**EDUCATION**

**A good common school education is fully recognized as one of the necessaries for a minor. Sec. 8. 16 Vt. 683.**

**DISTRICT**

**While it has a legal collector, cannot appoint any other to collect any particular tax, or the arrearages, or make temporary appointments. Sec. 3.**

" **Organization and existence of may be proved by reputation, in cases to which the District is in no way a party. Sec. 12. Sec. 26. 6 Vt. 389, and see 16 Vt. 439.**

" **Officers elected at an Annual Meeting will hold till others are elected at another annual meeting to supersede them, whether it be a few days more or less than a year. Sec. 14. 23 Vt. 416.**

" Are required by statute to be defined by geographical limits, and should be described by territorial boundaries and not by the names of the inhabitants. Sec. 27. 8 Vt. 402.

" Limits of must be defined by vote of the town, or vote must contain directions that will render its limits definitely ascertainable Sec. 28. 10 Vt. 480.

" Having been organized in fact, for a number of years and chosen its officers from time to time, cannot be organized again by the Selectmen because doubts are entertained of the regularity of previous organization. Sec. 29. 11 Vt. 607.

" The regular division of the town into, and the regular organization of school district will be presumed after the acquiescence of all concerned in their proceedings for more than fifteen years. Sec. 30. 16 Vt. 439.

" After suspension of all its functions for ten years, may properly organize anew at the requirement of the town, without being set off and constituted anew. Sec. 30. 16 Vt. 439.

" The annexation by vote of a town of a portion of its inhabitants to a district in an adjoining town, does not annex the territory owned by such persons, and in this respect differs from the effect of the erection of a district from territory of two different towns by concurrent vote of both towns. Sec 31. 21 Vt. 402. And such an arrangement is only temporary and can be revoked by either party. And the town in such a case, may at any time, by vote, resume its jurisdiction without the intervention of a board of Justices. Sec. 31. 21 Vt. 402.

" When A. B. proposed to a district in a school meeting to sell a certain lot to them under certain restrictions, for the erection of a school house, and the district instructed their committee to purchase said premises, upon which the selectmen, pursuant to the vote of the district, had located the school house, and the Prudential Committee did purchase said premises, and take a deed of them, in which deed there were imposed certain restrictions, according mainly with the restrictions of the original proposition; the contract and deed were sustained, and it was held that these restrictions did not defeat or impair the object of the purchase, and that the Prudential Committee had power to accept such deed. And such deed being executed with covenants of warranty, it was held no defence to the action for the purchasers' price, that there was a defect in the vendor's title. Sec 32. 22 Vt. 309.

" The division and incorporation of a town into two towns, which divides a school district into two portions, severed by the line of the town division.

so affects the severed portions that neither can be considered as an entire and legal district, nor can act as such. Sec. 33. 23 Vt. 421.

" Quere whether, when a district has been formed from territory of two or more towns by concurrent vote thereof, or by act of Legislature, either one of such towns has power to alter the limits of such district by setting individuals, within such town, from such district, to another district in such town.

" But any exclusive rights of such district, in such respect, may be waived by vote of the district. Sec. 34. 23 Vt. 626.

" The geographical limits of a school district must be defined by the inhabitants of the town at a legal meeting warned for that purpose, and unless so defined the survey should not be recorded. And where the town simply authorized such division without defining the boundaries, it was held insufficient. But a division made and recorded and subsequently recognized by the town, was held to be legal and sufficient. Sec. 35. 25 Vt. 311.

" A contract made with one of the building committee in which the others of the committee do not concur, to build a school house, upon a quantum meruit, if completed and the district accept the house, will be considered as ratified by and binding upon the district. Sec. 36. 28 Vt. 8.

" Alone can bring an action of *quare clausum fregit*. Sec. 49. 24 Vt. 528.

" Cannot vote a tax on a list which is not to be completed until after thirty days from voting the tax. Sec. 50. 4 Vt. 601.

" Can assess a tax upon such scholars only as actually attend the school. Sec. 51. 12 Vt. 473.

" May sustain an action against the listers for designating its taxable property as belonging to another district, so that it suffers a loss thereby. Sec. 56. 27 Vt. 650.

" Has no power over the subject of employing the teacher; that power is vested in the Prudential Committee. Sec. 65. 20 Vt. 487.

EVIDENCE

In justification of his acts, Collector must show rate bill, warrant, organization of district, appointment of Committee and vote laying the tax. Sec. 1. 1 Vt. 81.

" Of the true time of execution of a written instrument which bears a false date may be given by parol. Sec. 9. 27 Vt. 281.

" That a certificate which purports to be legal, never had any legal existence, or binding force as such, may be given by parol. Sec. 10. 27 Vt. 281.

" Parol, may be given that a certificate was given to one not entitled thereto, under his assurance that no legal use should be made of it, and thus the certificate be impeached. Sec. 11. 27 Vt. 281.

" The organization and existence of a School District, and that A. B. was Prudential Committee may be proved by reputation, by the fact that such District has exercised corporate power, and that A. B. acted as Prudential Committee without the production of the records, where the questions arise collaterally, and in proceedings to which the District is not a party. Sec. 12. 27 Vt. 755.

" Where the pleadings admit certain persons at certain times to have been Prudential Committee of a School District, testimony to show that they were not is inadmissible, but testimony of the identity of certain persons with those named in the pleadings is proper. Sec. 13. 29 Vt. 188.

" Parol evidence that all the legal voters were present and voted at the laying of a tax cannot supply defects in the record where the Collector justifies under his warrant and rate bill. Sec. 41. 17 Vt. 337.

" Facts that should be matter of record, should be proved by the record. Sec. 42. 17 Vt. 337.

" Of the dissatisfaction of a majority of the voters in a district with a teacher is inadmissible, in an action brought by the teacher for his wages. Sec. 64. 20 Vt. 487, and see 28 Vt. 576.

" That no examination was in fact made will not invalidate a certificate obtained by a teacher without fraud or improper means. Sec. 68. 20 Vt. 495.

EXCEPTIONS

Supreme Court will not on exceptions, examine a question not decided by the County Court. Sec. 19. 20 Vt. 495.

GRANT

A Legislative grant for the purpose of education cannot afterward be controlled by the Legislature. 11 Vt. 632.

GRAND LIST

The Grand List is not a legal basis for taxation till signed and sworn to by a majority of the Listers, as required by law. 32 Vt. 285.

LISTERS

Are liable to district for designating its property as belonging to another district, if on request of a special committee they refuse to correct their designation though no request be made by the Prudential Committee. Sec. 56. 27 Vt. 650.

" In making apprisals and assessments, act in a judicial capacity and incur no personal responsibility, where not actuated by malice; and the same is true wherever it is the evident intention of the law that they shall act solely upon their own judgment and discretion; but in regard to other duties, their acts are, for the most part, ministerial. The duty of the listers to set in the list the appraised value of all real and personal estate, in each school district severally, is wholly ministerial. Sec. 57. 24 Vt. 9.

MODERATOR

Chosen at annual meeting not necessarily to preside over all subsequent meetings in the year; the election of another to preside at a subsequent meeting will not invalidate its proceedings. Sec. 15. 26 Vt. 503.

NOTICE

For school meeting should issue seven days before the meeting, and should specify the business to be done. Sec 37. 14 Vt. 300.

OFFICERS

District, elected at an annual meeting, hold till others are elected at another annual meeting, to supersede them, whether it is a few days more or less than a year. Sec. 14. 23 Vt. 416.

" It is not necessary that the moderator chosen at the annual meeting should preside over every subsequent meeting in the year; the election of another to preside over a subsequent meeting will not invalidate the proceedings then had. Sec. 15. 26 Vt. 503.

" Public officers are entitled to reasonable intendments in their favor, the same that are applied to the proceedings of courts. Sec. 15. 66 Vt 503.

PROPERTY

Sold to satisfy district tax need not be sold in the district taxing: if sold in town it is sufficient. Sec. 4. 16 Vt. 439.

PLEADINGS

Indictment against town for neglect of selectmen to assess the three cent school tax—what it should state. Sec. 17. 13 Vt. 565.

" In an action of trespass, where the declaration contains several counts and a

plea commences and concludes in bar of the action generally, fully discussed. Sec. 18. 19 Vt. 102.

" Supreme Court will not, on exceptions examine a question not decided by the County Court. Sec. 19. 20 Vt. 495.

" An averment that the listers put the plaintiff's real estate in the Grand List at a certain sum, sufficient averment that he had a grand list of that amount. Sec. 20. 27 Vt. 221.

" A material averment argumentatively made, can only be taken advantage of by special demurrer. Sec. 21. 31 Vt. 337.

" If referee find and report the legal existence of school district from parol testimony "that it had been considered a district for forty years"—though such testimony is indefinite, report would not be reversed on that ground. Sec. 22. 30 Vt. 273.

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

When districts at their annual meeting have decided to appoint but one Prudential Committee, they cannot change it, or again act upon it during the year unless a legal vacancy occurs. Sec. 23. 20 Vt. 487.

" Refusal to do a certain act in good faith, not believing it to be a duty, will will not create a vacancy in the office; but the erection of a new district including within its limits the Prudential Committee of the old, will create a vacancy. Sec. 24. 26 Vt. 503 & 15 Vt. 657.

" Without vote of district to that effect, has no authority to employ counsel in a suit against a district officer, in which suit the district has an interest. Sec. 25. 30 Vt. 154.

" Has exclusive power of hiring teachers, the district have no power over the matter. Sec. 65. 20 Vt. 487.

" Cannot waive the requirements of law in regard to certificates to teachers, or bind the district by a contract with the teacher that he may teach the school without procuring a certificate. Sec. 69. 26 Vt. 116.

" Is the general official agent of a school district. Sec. 25. 33 Vt. 77.

SCHOOL DISTRICT. See District.

SCHOOL HOUSE

Prudential Committee have a right to occupy, while school is in operation, but not to the exclusion of the district.

" District at a meeting held for that purpose, voted to have a private school in the school house, and nothing appearing but that it would have answered all the purposes of a public school, and been open to all the children of the district, etc., it was held that there was nothing inconsistent with the rights of the district in allowing the school to continue for the time being merely, but that the district could not confer any exclusive right to the possession of the school house, for any definite time, upon any one.

" The district alone can bring an action of *quare clausum fregit*. Sec. 489. 24 Vt. 528.

" The taking of land for a school house, under act of 1857, being for public use, is not unconstitutional, and need not be limited to a mere site for a house, it may include land for a yard, &c. Sec. 49. 33 Vt. 271.

SCHOOL MEETING

Should have seven days notice, and a notice on the first day of the month for meeting on the seventh is not sufficient. Sec. 37. 14 Vt. 300.

" The notice or warrant for, should specify the business to be done, and without such notice, the proceedings will be rendered void. Sec. 37. 14 Vt. 300.

" It is not necessary to state in the warning or record of a school meeting, that the warning issued upon the application of the required number of freeholders; the proceedings will be presumed to be regular in this respect. Sec. 38. 16 Vt. 439.

" ..arned without specifying, in the warrant, the hour of meeting, is irregular and its proceedings are void. Sec. 40. 16 Vt. 439.

" Held pursuant to a warrant issued by the Clerk without application in writing, will be considered legal and valid. Sec. 43. 20 Vt. 487 & 23 Vt. 416.

" In computing the length of notice for school meeting, the rule for service of process will be applied; and either the day of posting notice, or the day of holding the meeting will be counted. Sec. 44. 20 Vt. 487.

" May vote to purchase land for school house when warned "To see what measures the district will take in relation to building a school house." Sec. 46. 20 Vt. 487. and see 22 Vt. 309.

" Under a warning "to see whether the district will have a school the ensuing winter and to see what method the district will take to pay the expense of said school" may vote a tax on the Grand List to defray the expense of the school, and a vote to pay the expense of the school with money drawn from the town, and the residue, if any, on the Grand List of the district, will authorize the Committee to make a rate bill on the Grand List of the district. Sec. 47. 23 Vt. 416.

" Records of, may, by the officer having them in charge, be made conformable to the facts by amendment; but such amendment should be made from original documents or minutes. Sec. 47. 27 Vt. 207.

" Should not be amended on trial. Sec. 40. 11 Vt. 618.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

If he neglects, before granting certificate, to make such examination as is necessary to afford reasonable evidence of possessing requisite qualifications, is unquestionably guilty of a dereliction of duty. Sec. 75. 20 Vt. 495.

TRESPASS

Will lie against Collector for seizing property, if the tax be illegal or illegally voted, although the rate bill and warrant may be regular on their face. Sec. 2. 4 Vt. 601.

TAXES

District cannot vote a tax on a list which is not to be completed until after thirty days from voting the tax.

" But a tax is not necessarily void because it is not assessed within thirty days after voting it. Sec. 50. 4 Vt. 601.

" May be assessed upon such scholars only as actually attend the school. Sec. 51. 12 Vt. 473.

" Raised to build a school house, will not be invalidated by the fact that the school house was illegally located and was adjudged a nuisance. Sec. 53. 26 Vt. 503.

" Voted by a district to pay for repairs on school house, without limitation as to amount or rate per cent., is sufficient and valid. Sec. 54. 27 Vt. 221. 12 Vt. 473.

" The warrant for the collection of, since the act authorizing districts to elect a Treasurer, properly requires the money, when collected, to be paid to the Treasurer, if one has been elected. Sec. 61. 29 Vt. 188.

" A resident in a school district and properly listed there on the 1st of April, remains subject to taxation therein, upon such list while it remains in force. Sec. 62. 32 Vt. 769.

TEACHER
Must procure a certificate before he can perform any legally meritorious service as teacher. Sec. 5. 12 Vt. 192.

" Who applied for examination and certificate on the morning of the first day of school but being deferred till the evening of the same day by Superintendent, and then receiving an examination and certificate, has substantially complied with the law, and at all events his certificate will avail *thereafter*. Sec. 6. 28 Vt. 576, and Sec. 8. 29 Vt. 433.

" Not excused for not obtaining certificate, by the fact that ill feeling existed between him and Superintendent. Sec. 8. 29 Vt. 433.

" Right of to correct his scholar similar to the right to correct a child or servant. But correction appearing on trial, or confessed to be excessive and cruel, is illegal. Sec. 63. 19 Vt. 102, and Sec. 73. 32 Vt. 114.

" Evidence of dissatisfaction of a majority of the voters in a district, is inadmissible in an action by teacher for wages. Sec. 64. 20 Vt. 487, & 28 Vt. 576.

" The power of employing a teacher is vested in the Prudential Committee; the district have no power over it. Sec. 65. 20 Vt. 487.

" Cannot be dismissed by the Prudential Committee without good and sufficient cause. Sec. 67. 20 Vt. 487.

" If without fraud, and by proper means, a teacher has obtained a certificate, the fact that it was granted without actual examination will not invalidate the certificate. Sec. 68. 20 Vt. 495.

" Must procure a certificate before he opens his school; and cannot be excused by the facts that he is a minor, that the Superintendent is sick or absent, or that there is a vacancy in the office, or that the Prudential Committee consented to his commencing school without a certificate. Sec. 69. 26 Vt. 115.

" Of a private school, may require a scholar to leave school, for insubordination, and on refusal may remove him, or cause him to be removed. Sec. 70. 27 Vt. 775.

" Leaving his school before the expiration of the time of his contract, without excuse, can recover nothing for part performance. Sec. 72. 29 Vt. 217.

" The teacher of a district school, with the assent of the Prudential Committee, may require an exercise in composition, in connection with Grammar and other studies, and enforce such requirement. Sec. 74. 32 Vt. 225.

U. S. DEPOSIT MONEY
The interest of the United States Deposit Money is not to be taken as a part of the proceeds of the school fund, and to go so far, as a relief against the three cent tax required by law. Sec. 76. 12 Vt. 127.

WARNING
For school meeting should give seven full days notice, and should specify the business to be done. Sec. 37. 14 Vt. 300.

" For school meeting need not state that it is issued upon the application of the required number of free holders; but it must specify the hour of the meeting. Sec. 38. 16 Vt. 439. See also Sec. 40. 17 Vt. 337.

" Should be recorded by the District Clerk; its record should show that the hour for the meeting was specified in the warning. Sec. 40. 17 Vt. 337.

" In computing the length of notice given in warning for school meeting, as in the service of process, either the day of posting notice, or the day of holding meeting will be reckoned. Sec. 44. 20 Vt. 487.

" To see what measures the district will take in relation to building a school

house, is sufficient to enable a district to vote to purchase land for that purpose. Sec. 46. 20 Vt. 384. See also 22 Vt. 309.

" An article in a warning for town meeting " to see if town will set off A, B " and C, and their real estate, from school district No. 5, the same to consti" tute a new district," held sufficiently definite to bring the matter before the town meeting. Sec. 36. 33 Vt. 219.

WARRANT

An omission to specify therein a time limited for the payment of taxes, cannot be taken advantage of by tax payers. 32 Vt. 769.

# FORMS

**Of Various Documents, Necessary in the Transaction of Business Connected with Schools.**

No. 1.

A REQUEST BY THREE VOTERS OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT TO THE DISTRICT CLERK TO WARN A MEETING OF THE INHABITANTS OF SAID SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR ERECTING OR REPAIRING SCHOOL HOUSE.

To the Clerk of School District number — in the Town of ——— in the County of ———

We the undersigned, inhabitants of the Town of ——— in the County of ——— residing in school district number — and legal voters in the same, hereby request you to appoint and notify a meeting of the inhabitants of said school district, to consider and act on the following propositions.

[Applicable thus far for any school meeting.]

1. To see if the District will erect a new school house in said District, or take measures for the repair of their present house.

2. To appoint a Committee to prepare and report a plan of such erection or repair with an estimate of the probable cost thereof.

3. To raise money by tax or otherwise to defray the expense of such erection or repair.

4. To do any other business within the scope of the foregoing propositions.

Dated at ———, ——— A. D. 18—

G. H———<br>
R. B———<br>
L. N———

[The above may be adapted to all varying exigencies by subsituting the different specifications under Form No. 5 and others, in place of those above inserted, or in addition thereto.]

No. 2.

FORM OF THE WARNING BY THE CLERK OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR A SCHOOL MEETING FOR THE ERECTION OR REPAIR OF SCHOOL HOUSE.

To the inhabitants of school district number — in the Town of ——— in the County of ————

Whereas an application in writing signed by three of the inhabitants of school district number — in the Town of ———— has been filed in my office requesting me as the Clerk of said district to appoint and notify a meeting of the inhabitants of said district. Therefore, you, the inhabitants of school district number — in said Town of ————, liable to pay taxes in said district, are hereby notified and warned to meet at ——— ———, in said district, on the —— day of ———, 18— at — o'clock, in the ———noon of said day, to consider and act on the following propositions :

1. To see if the District will order the erection of a new school house in said district, or take measures for the repair of their present one.

2. To appoint a committee to prepare and report a plan of such erection or repair with the probable expense of the same.

3. To raise money by tax or otherwise to defray the expenses of such erection or repair.

4. To do any other business within the scope of the foregoing propositions.

Dated at ————, ——— ——, A. D. 18—.

J. D———, *Clerk.*

---

No. 3.

WARNING OF ANNUAL MEETING OF SCHOOL DISTRICT, WHICH MAY ISSUE WITHOUT PREVIOUS APPLICATION THEREFOR.

SCHOOL MEETING.

The inhabitants of School District No. —, in the Town of ——— are hereby notified to meet at ————, in said town, on the last Tuesday of March, A. D. 18— at — o'clock in the ——noon, to consider and act on the following propositions :

[The above heading will serve for a general one.]

1st. To choose a Moderator to govern said Meeting.

2d. To choose a Clerk, Collector, Prudential Committee, and Treasurer for the year ensuing.

3d. To see if said District will vote to sustain a school or schools therein during the ensuing year, and if so, for what length of time, and from what day or days.

4th. To see if the District will vote to raise a tax upon the Grand List to defray the expenses of such school, or take other measures therefor.

5th. To transact any other proper and necessary business.

X—— Y——, Clerk of District No. —.

---

No. 4.

VARIOUS SPECIFICATIONS OF BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED, THAT MAY BE INSERTED IN ANY APPLICATION FOR A WARNING, OR IN ANY WARNING, AS THEY MAY BE NEEDED.

*To divide the school of any District into two or more departments and provide therefor.*

[Same heading as in No. 3.]

To see if said District will vote to divide its school into two or more departments and grade the same with reference to each other.

To see if said District will provide additional accommodations for its schools by adding to or altering its school house, or by erecting another.

To raise money by a tax upon the Grand List of such District to defray the expenses of such addition, alteration or construction.

To see what directions said District will give to the teacher of its higher school in reference to teaching in such school any of the sciences, or higher branches of a thorough education.

---

No. 5.

RELATING TO THE FORMATION AND DISSOLUTION OF UNION DISTRICTS.

(*a*) To see if said District will agree, by a vote of two-thirds of the voters thereof present at such meeting, to unite with contiguous Districts, No. —, and No. —, in said town, for the purpose of maintaining a Union School, to be kept for the benefit of the older children of such Districts as may thus unite.

---

*Where a District wishes to unite with Union Districts.*

(*b*) To see if said District by a vote of two-thirds of its legal voters will vote to join Union District No. — in said town, contiguous to said District.

---

*Where a District wishes to withdraw from a Union District.*

(*c*) To see if said District, by a vote of two-thirds of its legal voters present, will vote to withdraw from Union District No. —, in said town.

---

*For Union District in regard to last two cases.*

(*d*) To see if said Union District will, by a vote of two-thirds of

its voters present, permit the withdrawal of District No. — in accordance with its request.

(*e*) To see if said Union District will by a majority of two-thirds of its legal voters present, vote to receive District No. — in said town, the same being a contiguous District and desiring to be thus received.

---

No. 6.

## RECORD OF SCHOOL MEETING.

[Insert the warning for the meeting in full, including Clerk's signature and then proceed as follows,]

I certify the above to be a true copy of the original warning.

Attest, A——B., *Clerk.*

Be it remembered that at a meeting of the inhabitants of School District No. —, in the town of ————, held pursuant to the foregoing warning at the ———— in said District, on the —— day of ———, A. D. 18—, the moderator of said District presiding.

[*For Annual Meeting of District.*]

(*a*) The following business was transacted.

H. K—— was elected Moderator, L. M——— was elected Clerk, N. O—— was elected Collector, P. Q——, R. S——, and T. V—— were elected Prudential Committee, and X. Y—— was elected Treasurer of said District for the year ensuing.

It was voted to sustain a school in said District during seven months of the year ensuing, viz: a summer school of four months from and after the second Monday in May, and a winter school of three months from and after the second Monday in November.

It was voted that a tax of —— cents on the dollar of the Grand List of said District be assessed, and that the same be made payable on or before the —— day of —— then next.

A true record.

Attest, L. M——, *Clerk.*

---

*To erect or repair School House.*

(*b*) [Insert warning and commence as in Form No. 6.]

The following business was transacted.

It was, upon motion *Resolved*, That the comfort of the children and the best interests of the District, demand the erection of a new school house.

It was voted that J. D —— and R. S—— be appointed a Committee to prepare and report a plan for such new school house, with an estimate of the probable expense of the same and report thereon as soon as may be.

It was voted to adjourn to the —— day of ——— A. D. 18— at —o'clock P. M.

And now on this —— day of ———, A. D. 18— the meeting having re-assembled, was called to order by the Moderator.

J. D—— and R. S—— the Committee appointed therefor, made their report of a plan of a school house, together with an estimate of the expense of construction, which report was accepted and ordered to be recorded, and is in the words and figures following. [Here insert report.]

After consideration and discussion of said report, it was voted that the same be adopted, and that the Prudential Committee be directed to proceed in the erection of a house in accordance with such plan.

It was voted that a tax of — cents on the dollar on the grand list of said District, and payable on the —— day of ——— A. D. 18— be assessed and collected to defray the expense of such school house.

---

*To divide and grade the Schools.*

(*c*) (Insert the warning and proceed as in Form No. 6.)

The following business was transacted :

It was resolved, that convenience and economy and the interests of the scholars require, and the District hereby directs, that the school in said District be divided, and formed into two deparments or grades.

It was voted that the Prudential Committee be directed to proceed immediately to make an addition to the school house of said District, upon the ——— side thereof, said addition to be constructed of ——— to be —— feet by —— feet on the ground, and at least ten feet from floor to ceiling.

It was voted that a tax of — cents on the dollar of the grand list of said District, payable on the — day of ——— A. D. 18— be assessed, and collected to defray the expense of making such addition.

It was voted that the teacher of the higher of the schools of said District be directed to give instruction, to those who desire it, in —— and —— and ——.

---

*To unite in forming Union District.*

(*d*) (Insert warning and proceed as in No. 6.)

It was voted that the interests of the District require that the older children should receive instruction in the higher branches of knowledge, and that opportunity therefor should be given.

It was voted by a majority of more than two-thirds of the voters present, that said District hereby declares its desire to unite with adjoining Districts No. ——, No. ——, and No. ——, in said town for the purpose of maintaining a Union School to be kept for the benefit of the older children in such Districts.

*To unite with a Union District.*

(*e*) It was voted, by a majority of more than two-thirds of its legal voters that the District hereby declares its desire to unite itself with and become a part of Union District No. —— in said town.

*To withdraw from Union District.*

(*f*) It was voted by a majority of more than two-thirds of the legal voters of said District present, that said District hereby expresses its desire to withdraw itself from Union District No. —— in said town, of which it now forms a part.

No. 7.

APPLICATION TO SELECTMEN FOR LOCATION OF SCHOOL HOUSE WHERE DISTRICT CANNOT AGREE.

To A. B——, C. D——, and E. F——, Selectmen of the town of ———.

The undersigned, Prudential Committee of District No. — in said town, represent that said District, at a meeting thereof, legally warned and held on the — day of ———, voted to erect a new school house for the use of the schools of said District, but are not able to agree upon a location therefor.

We therefore officially request that you, the Selectmen of ——— will, in pursuance of law in such case provided, proceed to select and fix upon such place within said District, for a location for such school house, as to you shall seem best.

Dated at ———, this ——day of ———, A. D. 18—.

L. M——, N. O——, P. R——, *Prudential Com. of District No.——.*

No. 8.

FORM OF A CERTIFICATE BY THE PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE, ACCOMPANYING A RATE BILL.

We the undersigned, Prudential Committee of School District No. — in the town of ——— certify that the foregoing is a correct Rate Bill of a tax of — cents on the dollar of the grand list of the inhabitants of said School District, and of the property in said District liable to school taxes, raised for the purpose of ——— ——— in said District, and ordered to be paid to the Treasurer of said District by the ——— day of —— A. D. 18—, agreeably to a vote of the inhabitants of said District, at a meeting thereof legally warned and holden for that purpose on the —day of ——— A. D. 18—.

Approved and certified by us, this — day of ——— A. D. 18—.

——— ———, ——— ———, ——— ——— *Prudential Com.*

No. 9.

FORM OF A WARRANT FOR THE COLLECTION OF A SCHOOL TAX.

STATE OF VERMONT, }
——— — COUNTY. }

To ——— ———, Collector of school taxes for the School District number — in the town of ——— in said ——— County. Greeting.

By the authority of the State of Vermont you are hereby commanded to levy and collect of the several persons named in the Rate Bill herewith committed to you the sum of money annexed to the name of each person respectively, and pay the same to the Treasurer of School District number — in said town of ——— on or before the — day of —— A. D. 18—, and if any person shall refuse or neglect to pay the sum in which he or she is assessed in said Rate Bill you are further hereby commanded to distrain the goods, chattels or estate of such person so refusing or neglecting, and the same dispose of according to law, for the satisfying the said sum with your fees, and for want thereof you are hereby commanded to take his or her body, and him or her commit to the keeper of the common jail in ——— in said ——— County, within the said prison, who is hereby commanded to receive such person, and him or her safely keep until he or she shall pay said sum so assessed with legal costs, together with your fees, or be otherwise discharged or released according to law.

Given under my hand at———, this— day of ——— A. D. 18—.

——— ———, Justice of the Peace.

---

No. 10.

APPLICATION BY THREE VOTERS IN AN UNORGANIZED TOWN TO THE SELECTMEN OF AN ADJOINING ORGANIZED TOWN, TO ORGANIZE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN SUCH UNORGANIZED TOWN.

To the Selectmen of ———, in the County of ———, the same being an organized town.

The undersigned, inhabitants of ——— in said County, freeholders, and voters in the same, show that said ——— is an unorganized town, and that no School Districts have as yet been established in the same. We therefore request that you will organize one or more School Districts in such ———, for the instruction of the young, and that you will define and determine the limits of said School Districts, and number the same agreeably to the statute laws of this State in such case made and provided.

Dated at———, ——— —, A. D. 18—.

A. S——
C. T——
J. D——

## No. 11.

WARNING FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT IN AN UNORGANIZED TOWN.

To the inhabitants of ———, in the county of ———, the same being an unorganized town.

Whereas A. S——, C. T——, and J. D——, three of the inhabitants of said town of ———, have by their request in writing, setting forth that said town is unorganized, and no School Districts are as yet organized therein, requested that one or more School Districts may be organized therein for the instruction of the young.

Therefore you the inhabitants of said town of ———, residing and liable to pay taxes therein, are hereby notified and warned to meet at —— in said town, at — o'clock in the ——noon of the — day of ——— A. D. 18— to act upon the subject matter of said petition and see if the said inhabitants will organize a School district in said town by the appointment of a Moderator and Clerk of said District, according to law.

Dated at ———, this — day of ——— A. D. 18—.

R. S——, T. U——, V. W——, *Selectmen of* ——— *adjoining said town of* ———.

## No. 12.

A REQUEST BY THREE VOTERS IN AN UNORGANIZED SCHOOL DISTRICT, TO THE SELECTMEN OF THE TOWN FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF SAID DISTRICT.

To the Selectmen of ———, in the County of ———.

We the undersigned, inhabitants of said ———, residing in School District number — in said town, and voters in the same, show that the said School District number — has not, as yet, been organized, and that the inhabitants of said District are desirous that said School District may be organized. Wherefore we make this request in writing that said School District number — in said ——— be duly and legally organized according to the statute law of this State in such case provided.

Dated at ———, ——— —, A. D. 18—.

A. B——
C. D——
E. F——

## No. 13.

FORM OF A WARNING FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT IN AN ORGANIZED TOWN.

To the inhabitants of School District number — in the town of ——— in the County of ———

Whereas A. B——, C. D——, and E. F——, three of the inhabitants of said ———, residing in school District number —, in said town, have by their request in writing setting forth that said School District has not, as yet, been organized, prayed that the same may be organized.

Therefore you, the inhabitants of ———, residing in said School District number —, liable to pay taxes in the same, are hereby notified and warned to meet at ——— ———, in said School District at — o'clock in the —noon, of the — day of ———, 18—, to act on the subject matter of said petition, and see if the said inhabitants will organize the said school district number — by the appointment of a Moderator and Clerk of said district, according to the provisions of the laws of this State.

Dated at ———, ——— —, A. D. 18—.

O. D——, S. F——, T. H——, } *Selectmen of* ———

---

No. 14.

FORM OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT FORMED OF CONTIGUOUS TERRITORY IN TWO TOWNS.

To Hon. ——— ———, one of the Judges of the County Court for ——— County.

We the undersigned, inhabitants of ——— in ——— County, residing in a School District called number —, which is formed of territory lying partly in said ———, and partly in the town of ———, in said County, and being legal voters in said School District, show to said Judge that there are prudential reasons for the dissolution of said district, and that we desire the said district may be dissolved. We therefore pray your Honor to appoint three Justices of the Peace of said ——— County, to make inquisition in the premises, and if sufficient cause therefor be shown that they will order the said district to be dissolved.

Dated at ———, ——— —, 18—.

A. B——,
C. D——,
E. F——.

---

To E. W——, H. M——, and S. T——, three Justices of the Peace within and for the County of ———.

Whereas A. B——, C. D——, and E. F——, of ———, in ——— County, have represented to me that the School District called number — in ——— is formed of territory lying partly in said ——— and partly in ——— in said County, and that they desire the union

of said District may be dissolved, and have made their application in writing to that effect.

Therefore in pursuance of the statute in such case provided, I hereby appoint you, the said Justices, to make inquiry into the circumstances, and if in your opinion it shall be expedient to dissolve said District, that you order the same to be dissolved, and make the proper certificate thereof for record in the Town Clerk's office of said ——— and ———, and order such distribution of the property of said district, and the payment of such damages, if any, as shall be just and equitable.

Given under my hand at ———, this — day of ——— A. D. 18—.

———, ———, } *Assistant Judge of County Court.*

---

To all whom it may concern.

The undersigned, Justices of the Peace for ——— County, appointed to make inquisition as specified in the within commission, having first given due notice to all parties interested, have attended to the duties assigned in our appointment, and from a careful consideration of the circumstances think it expedient that said district be dissolved.

Wherefore we the said Justices do hereby order and direct that said school district number —, lying partly in ——— and partly in ———, be dissolved, and the same is hereby dissolved. And we further order the property of said district to be distributed as follows, that is to say, that the school house and furniture and fixtures standing in said ——— be assigned to the inhabitants of said district residing in said ———, and that the sum of — dollars be paid to the inhabitants of said district residing in said ——— by the said inhabitants residing in said ———, and that the same be paid in six months from date, and we have made out and certified a copy of this our order for record in said ———, and a like copy for record in said ———, and herewith return this our commission with this report of our execution of the same.

Dated at ———, this — day of ——— 18—.

E. W——, H. M——, S. T——, } *Justices of the Peace.*

---

No. 15.

FORM OF AN EXTENT WHICH MAY BE ISSUED AGAINST THE COLLECTOR IN CASE OF HIS DELINQUENCY.

STATE OF VERMONT, ——— County. } To any Sheriff or Constable in the State. Greeting.

Whereas a rate bill and warrant for the collection of a school tax voted by the inhabitants of school district number — in the town of

——— of — cents on the dollar, amounting in all to the sum of —— dollars, and made payable on or before the ——— day of ———, A. D. 18— was duly delivered to ——— ———, the Collector of said district for collection. And whereas the said ——— ——— has failed to pay over the full amount of said rate bill by the time specified therefor, and is now delinquent in the sum of — dollars, which has been duly demanded of him, and whereas the Prudential Committee of said district have presented their petition in writing to me, one of the Justices of the Peace in said County of ———, setting out the above facts, and praying that an extent may be issued against the said ——— ——— collector as aforesaid for the said sum of — dollars, now in arrears, and the said ——— ——— having been duly summoned to appear and show cause why such extent should not be issued, has neglected to show any good cause why such extent should not issue for the arrears of said tax.

Therefore, By the authority of the State of Vermont, you are hereby commanded that of the goods, chattels, or estate of the said ——— ——— to be by him shown unto you or found within your precinct you cause to be levied, and the same being disposed of according to law, you pay to the said Prudential Committee of said School District the said sum of — dollars, being the residue of said rate bill for which said collector is now in arrear, and also satisfy yourself for your own fees, and for want of the goods, chattels or stock of the said ——— ——— to be by him shown unto you or found within your precinct, you are hereby commanded to take the body of the said ——— ———, collector as aforesaid and him commit to the keeper of the common jail in ———, in said ——— County, within the said prison, who is hereby commanded to receive the said ——— ———, and him safely keep until he pay the aforesaid sum of ——— dollars, and legal cost together with your fees, or otherwise be discharged or released according to law.

Hereof fail not, but of this extent and your doings thereon make due return within sixty days.

Given under my hand at ———, this — day of ———, A. D. 18—.

A. B———, Justice of the Peace.

---

No. 16.

LIST OF CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 4 AND 18 AND HEADS OF FAMILIES RESIDENT IN DISTRICT ON THE 1ST OF JANUARY, ANNUALLY TO BE MADE BY THE DISTRICT CLERK AND BY HIM RETURNED TO THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE BETWEEN THE 15TH AND 25TH DAYS OF FEBRUARY.

List of children, heads of families, &c., in District No. — in ———

| Heads of families. | Names of children. | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. B. | C. B. | H. B. | R. B. | 3 |
| G. H. | F. H. | W. H. | | 2 |

No. of weeks school taught by male teachers,

No. by female teachers,
Amount of wages paid male teachers, exclusive of board, $
Amount paid female teachers, $
Cost of board for teachers, for year, $
Cost of fuel, furniture and incidentals, $
I certify the above to be true returns, for district No —, as required by law.
Attest, C. D——, *District Clerk.*

No. 17.

ABSTRACT FROM DISTRICT CLERK'S RETURNS, REQUIRED TO BE MADE BY TOWN CLERK ON OR BEFORE THE 1ST TUESDAY OF APRIL ANNUALLY AND DELIVERED TO TOWN SUPERINTENDENT.

| Districts. | No. heads of families. | No. children of school age. | Weeks taught by males. | Weeks taught by females. | Wages p'd males. | Wages p'd females. | Cost of board. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. 1. | | | | | | | |
| " 2. | | | | | | | |
| " 3. | | | | | | | |
| | Cost of fuel &c. | Share of public money. | | | | | |

The foregoing is a true statement of the statistics of the common schools in the town of ——— as obtained by me from the returns of district clerks, made to me on the first Tuesday in April, A. D. 18—.
Attest, C. D., *Town Clerk.*

No. 18.

NOTICE BY SUPERINTENDENT OF TIME AND PLACE OF PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS.

Notice is hereby given to all persons who are intending to apply for situations as teachers in the Common Schools of the town of ——— in the County of ——— that the public examination for teachers required by law within said town, will be held at ——— in said town, on the —— day of [either in April or May, or November] at ——— o'clock in the ——noon. All persons designing to teach in the Common Schools of said town are desired to be present promptly at the time and place aforesaid.
All citizens are respectfully and cordially invited to attend.
A. B——, *Town Superintendent of*———.

No. 19.

CERTIFICATE TO TEACHER.

TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE.

This certifies that on the ——————— day of ———— A. D. 18—, C—— D——— of ——————— was examined

and is approved as a teacher in the Common Schools in the town of ———.

} *Town Superintendent of the town of*———

No. 20.

SUPERINTENDENT'S LIST OF TEACHERS EXAMINED, TO BE LODGED IN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 1ST, IN EACH YEAR.

I————, Town Superintendent of schools in the town of ———, hereby render the following as a statement of the different teachers examined by me since the first day of February last together with the dates of their certificates.

A. B———, ——— day of ———, A. D. 18—,
C. D———, " " " "
E. F———, " " " " &c., &c.

I certify that the above is a true and correct statement of what it purports to convey.

Dated at ——— this —— day of ———, A. D., 18—,
X. Y———, *Town Superintentent of*———.

No. 21.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REVOCATION OF TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE, TO BE FILED IN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE AND COPY THEREOF DELIVERED TO PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE AND TO TEACHER WHOSE CERTIFICATE IS REVOKED.

I, ————, Town Superintendent of schools in the town of ——, hereby certify that upon repeated personal examination of the school taught by ———, in the district No. —, in said town, I have become satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the said ———, the teacher of said school, is incompetent to teach or govern said school properly, [or is setting an evil example before his school], and on that account and pursuant to law in such cases made and provided, I hereby declare the certificate heretofore granted to said ———, liable to revocation, and the same is revoked.

X. Y———, *Town Superintendent of* ———.

No. 22.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ACCOUNT FOR SERVICES, TO BE PRESENTED TO THE COURT AUDITOR TOGETHER WITH THE RECEIPT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD FOR STATISTICAL RETURNS.

A. D — 18—, State of Vermont in account with X. Y——, Superintendent of schools for the town of————, in ——— County, Dr.

No. by female teachers,
Amount of wages paid male teachers, exclusive of board, $
Amount paid female teachers, $
Cost of board for teachers, for year, $
Cost of fuel, furniture and incidentals, $
I certify the above to be true returns, for district No —, as required by law.
Attest, C. D——, *District Clerk.*

No. 17.

ABSTRACT FROM DISTRICT CLERK'S RETURNS, REQUIRED TO BE MADE BY TOWN CLERK ON OR BEFORE THE 1ST TUESDAY OF APRIL ANNUALLY AND DELIVERED TO TOWN SUPERINTENDENT.

| Districts. | No. heads of families. | No. children of school age. | Weeks taught by males. | Weeks taught by females. | Wages p'd males. | Wages p'd females. | Cost of board. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. 1. | | | | | | | |
| " 2. | | | | | | | |
| " 3. | | | | | | | |
| | Cost of fuel &c. | Share of public money. | | | | | |

The foregoing is a true statement of the statistics of the common schools in the town of ——— as obtained by me from the returns of district clerks, made to me on the first Tuesday in April, A. D. 18—.
Attest, C. D., *Town Clerk.*

No. 18.

NOTICE BY SUPERINTENDENT OF TIME AND PLACE OF PUBLIC EXAMINATION OF TEACHERS.

Notice is hereby given to all persons who are intending to apply for situations as teachers in the Common Schools of the town of ——— in the County of ——— that the public examination for teachers required by law within said town, will be held at ——— in said town, on the —— day of [either in April or May, or November] at ——— o'clock in the ——noon. All persons designing to teach in the Common Schools of said town are desired to be present promptly at the time and place aforesaid.
All citizens are respectfully and cordially invited to attend.
A. B——, *Town Superintendent of*———.

No. 19.

CERTIFICATE TO TEACHER.

TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE.

This certifies that on the ——————— day of ———— A. D. 18—, C—— D———— of ——————— was examined

and is approved as a teacher in the Common Schools in the town of ———.

} *Town Superintendent of the town of*———

No. 20.

SUPERINTENDENT'S LIST OF TEACHERS EXAMINED, TO BE LODGED IN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 1ST, IN EACH YEAR.

I————, Town Superintendent of schools in the town of ———, hereby render the following as a statement of the different teachers examined by me since the first day of February last together with the dates of their certificates.

A. B———, ——— day of ———, A. D. 18—,
C. D———, " " " "
E. F———, " " " " &c., &c.

I certify that the above is a true and correct statement of what it purports to convey.

Dated at ——— this —— day of ———, A. D., 18—,
X. Y———, *Town Superintentent of*———.

No. 21.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REVOCATION OF TEACHER'S CERTIFICATE, TO BE FILED IN TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE AND COPY THEREOF DELIVERED TO PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE AND TO TEACHER WHOSE CERTIFICATE IS REVOKED.

I, ————, Town Superintendent of schools in the town of ——, hereby certify that upon repeated personal examination of the school taught by ———, in the district No. —, in said town, I have become satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the said ———, the teacher of said school, is incompetent to teach or govern said school properly, [or is setting an evil example before his school], and on that account and pursuant to law in such cases made and provided, I hereby declare the certificate heretofore granted to said ———, liable to revocation, and the same is revoked.

X. Y———, *Town Superintendent of* ———.

No. 22.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ACCOUNT FOR SERVICES, TO BE PRESENTED TO THE COURT AUDITOR TOGETHER WITH THE RECEIPT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD FOR STATISTICAL RETURNS.

A. D — 18—, State of Vermont in account with X. Y——, Superintendent of schools for the town of————, in ——— County, Dr.

May —, To one day spent in examination of teachers, $1 00
To — days spent in visiting schools at the following dates, viz:
June — and — and — and —  5 00
July — and — and — and — and —  6 00
November ——— To one day examination of teachers,  1 00
To so much for Report made to March meeting, $

I certify the above and foregoing to be a true and correct account of services rendered by me officially.

X. Y———, *Town Superintendent of* ———.

---

STATE OF VERMONT, } At ———— this —— day of—— 18—,
——— County, ss. } Then personally appeared the said ———— Superintendent and made oath (or affirmation) to the correctness of his account as above rendered.

Before me

———— *Justice of the Peace.*

# INDEX OF FORMS.


Form No. 1. Request to District Clerk to warn meeting for erecting or repairing school house.
" No. 2. Warning for above meeting.
" No. 3. Warning for annual meeting.
" No. 4. Warning for dividing and grading school, &c.
" No. 5. (*a*) " to unite in formation of Union District.
(*b*) " to unite with Union Districts already formed.
(*c*) " to withdraw from Union District.
(*d*) " for Union District to allow withdrawal.
(*e*) " for Union District to receive District.
" No. 6 Heading for Record of school meeting
" (*a*) Record for annual meeting.
" (*b*) " for meeting to erect or repair school house.
" (*c*) " for division or grading of schools, &c.
" (*d*) " for meeting to unite in forming Union District.
" (*e*) " for meeting to unite with Union District.
" (*f*) " for meeting to withdraw from Union District.
" No. 7. Application to Selectmen for location of school house where district cannot agree.
" No. 8. Certificate of Prudential Committee accompanying rate bill.
" No. 9. Warrant for rate bill.
" No. 10. Application for organization of District in an unorganized town.
" No. 11. Warning for meeting for organization of District in unorganized town.
" No. 12. Application to organize District not yet organized, in organized town.
" No. 13. Warning to organize District in an organized town.
" No. 14. Form for proceedings in the dissolution of school district formed of contiguous territory in different towns.
" No. 15. Extent against delinquent collector.
" No. 16. List of children, &c., to be taken by district clerks.
" No. 17. Abstract from returns of district clerks, to be made by town clerks.
" No. 18. Notice of examination of teachers.
" No. 19. Teacher's certificate.
" No. 20. Superintendent's list of teachers examined.
" No. 21. " Revocation of certificate.
" No. 22. " Account for services.



EIGHTH

# ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

# Vermont Board of Education,

WITH THE

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

MADE TO THE BOARD,

**September, 1864.**

Burlington:
FREE PRESS BOOK AND JOB PRINTING OFFICE.
1864.



# REPORT

## OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

*To the Honorable the Legislature of the State of Vermont :*

GENTLEMEN :

The Board of Education hereby submit their Eighth Annual Report.

For a full history of the workings of the common school system during the past year, reference is made to the accompanying Report of the Secretary of the Board; the necessary voluminousness of which makes brevity admissible and advisable in the present document.

At a session of the Board held at Brandon, on the 27th of January 1864, a work on the geography and history of Vermont, by the Rev. Samuel B. Hall, which had previously been selected provisionally, was re-examined, and being found to be perfected in accordance with the recommendation of the Board, was definitely selected as the text book to be used in the district schools of the State, as required by the statute of 1862. The book is now in press, and it is hoped that it will be published in season to be used in the coming winter schools.

The statistics presented in the Secretary's Report are valuable subjects for examination and comparison, and furnish satisfactory evidence of the good results of the present school system. But no statistics, however exact and copious, can give an adequate idea of the life that has been infused into all the educational movements of the State, during the eight years that have now elapsed since the system went into operation. Nor is it possible by any means whatever, to indicate precisely how great progress has been made.

> "The march of armies may be told,
> But not the march of mind."

That the people of Vermont, as a whole, take much more liberal views of common school education than they formerly did, that they have more enlarged ideas of the duties and qualifications of teachers, that they are ready to tax themselves heavily in order to secure better school-houses, better teachers, and better schools, is evident to the most cursory observer. That many of the schools have been multiplied in value several-fold, and that there are hardly any schools in the State which have not greatly improved, under the operation of the system, is the confident belief of those whose opportunities for observation have been the best, and whose interest in the cause of education has led them to make the closest scrutiny.

The beneficent results of the system are also to be found in the lighter hearts and happier school hours of many pupils to whom the once repulsive school has become attractive; in the advanced standard of qualifications required in teachers, and the professional ambition infused into them; in the increased zeal and fidelity of committees; in the greater interest of parents in the education of their children; in the valuable services rendered by the many town

superintendents who have been mindful of their official obligations; in the hearty support generally given by the public press; in the large attendance upon school celebrations, educational meetings, teachers' institutes, and teachers' associations; and in the strengthened faith, hope, and energy of the long-tried friends of education, who accept the present state of things as the sure omen and absolute pledge that their most sanguine expectations will, at no distant day, be realized.

The valuable results already attained fall very far short, however, of what the system is competent to produce and of what the true interests of the State require. Much as has been accomplished, much more remains to be done. Apathy and prejudice have only been partially removed. Many citizens still take no interest in the e ucational concerns of the State, and even complain of the taxes assessed upon them to build school-houses and sustain schools. Not all teachers have yet attained to a just conception of the high responsibilities and exalted privileges which attach to the teacher's profession, nor do all superintendents and committees discharge their duties with zeal and fidelity proportioned to the importance of the affairs entrusted to them. There is still need of a vigorous and continued use of the same means that have been successful in accomplishing what has already been done. There will be need, sooner or later, of adding to the school system of Vermont some features, which, in other States, are not only regarded as useful, but in practice proved themselves indispensable to the greatest efficiency of a school system. It is not possible that our system should remain unaltered. That would be inconsistent alike with true conservatism and true progress. As its powers are developed and its operations enlarged, it will require, at safe and guarded intervals, additional legislation. Some such desirable modifications already

suggest themselves, but the time to adopt them having not yet arrived, the Board forbear to enter upon a discussion of their merits.

It can hardly be necessary to urge upon you the duty of fostering the school system as it now exists. No greater or higher trust is committed to the representatives of the people than that of protecting, strengthening, and, in due season, perfecting that system. Especially does it commend itself to you at the present time, when the capacity of man to govern himself is put to a severer test than has ever before been applied to it. At such a time as this, we cannot sufficiently admire the wisdom and foresight of those who, at the very commencement of our existence as a State, established common schools everywhere; who "on the first clearings of the forest, by the side of the forest dwellings which they erected for shelter, built the school-house; and of the produce of the first crops planted for their precarious subsistence, apportioned a share for the maintenance of teachers." Nor can we sufficiently estimate the advantages which the country now derives and will continue to derive from their judicious labors in that regard. It is not by a constitution, however wisely adjusted, nor by laws, however equal, just, and good, nor yet by armies, though numerous and powerful as those which now confront the rebel hosts, that the life of a nation can be preserved and perpetuated. Virtue and intelligence are the only solid foundation upon which a State can be built, and upon which being built it will stand secure against whatever dangers may assail it. By them our institutions can be preserved; without them, natural death is inevitable, either by violent convulsions, or by slow but not less fatal decay. Ignorance is not the mother of patriotism nor of republicanism, but the destroyer of both. Education, in its enlightening, elevating, and reforming influences, is more potent to uphold the institutions of

freedom and maintain the rights of man, than armies and navies in their proudest strength.

For the great mass of the rising generation, the common school must be, if not the only, yet the most available means of education. Whatever influence the higher institutions of learning may have in the diffusion of "sound wisdom and instruction," it is to the common schools, the people's colleges, that the majority of our youth will resort for their education. The knowledge which they there acquire, the intellectual discipline to which they are subjected. the habits of thought and action which they there form, will be their principal preparation for usefulness and good citizenship. Viewed from this point of observation the cause of common schools rises to an importance that should secure for it the most earnest attention of all who love their country and desire its welfare. When the common school system shall have unfolded all its powers; when every school shall be supplied with its thoroughly educated and thoroughly trained teacher; when every school-house shall be constructed with a wise regard to the comfort and health of its occupants; when the protection and improvement of common schools shall be regarded as one of the first duties of government, then will the public mind be universally refined and enlightened, patriotism will be purified, our nation will be established upon an immovable foundation, and the people will be crowned with the benefits and blessings of true freedom.

We remain, very respectfully,

JOHN GREGORY SMITH, *ex officio*,
PAUL DILLINGHAM, " "
TIMOTHY P. REDFIELD,
HILAND HALL,
PLINY H. WHITE,
} Board of Education.

# Secretary's Report.



# SECRETARY'S REPORT.

VERMONT BOARD OF EDUCATION,
SECRETARY'S OFFICE, SEPTEMBER, A. D. 1864.

By the law organizing the Board of Education, it is provided that the Secretary of the Board shall

"—prepare and present to the Board of Education, on the first day of "their annual session, a report of his official doings for the preceding "year, and a statement of the condition of the common schools in the "State; of the expenditure of the school monies therein; and such sug- "gestions for improving their organization and modes of instruction, "together with such other information in regard to systems of school in- "struction in other States and Countries, as he shall deem proper."

*To the Hon. Vermont Board of Education:*

Pursuant to the direction of the law of the State, as quoted above, I now present the Eighth Annual Report of this department.

## OFFICIAL DOINGS.

During the year just passed, I have endeavored to discharge the various duties required of the Secretary of your Hon. Board by the law of the State. The School Registers, modified as required by the Revised Statutes, were duly prepared and forwarded, the statistical circulars were distributed at the proper time; the general visitation of the State has been made; and the Teachers' Institutes have been held. By the provisions of the General Statutes, quite a number of changes, some of greater and some of less importance, were made in the requirements of the law in regard to the collection of educational statistics; and on that account it became necessary to modify correspondingly the character of the School Registers. Such changes in the Registers as seemed necessary, have been made, and it is hoped that, as thus changed, they will be found to be adapted to their purposes under existing laws.

Special instructions were received from the Board at their annual meeting in October, 1862, that the topic of Graded Schools and their adaptation to meet the educational wants of the State, should be presented whenever it seemed advisable, during the year. These instructions, in the wisdom of which I fully concurred, were fully obeyed during the year 1862–63. And, feeling that an equal necessity for the presentation of this particular topic still existed, the same matter has, during the year last past, whenever a feasible opportunity presented, been

dwelt upon with much care in localities where local circumstances were such as to give a practical character to such a discussion.

## TEACHERS' INSTITUTES.

The first of the Institutes for the year was held in the Congregational Church, at Johnson, in the County of Lamoille, on the 8th and 9th days of December, 1863. The attendance was quite large in the beginning, and steadily increased throughout the session. Rev. Messrs. Dougherty of Johnson, Bartlett of Morrisville, Wheelock of Cambridge, Bailey of Hydepark, and Howard of Johnson, all attended the sessions of the Institute, and gave much valuable assistance in its work. Mr. Pearl of the Johnson Academy, was also present and assisted. For several years the Institutes in this County have been exceedingly well attended, and have been characterized as well by the thoughtful and earnest interest manifested in the general subject by those present; and the present Institute was no exception to this rule. I have very seldom seen so deep and strong an interest displayed, and attribute it to the high character of the gentlemen to whose care as Superintendents, the people of the county habitually entrust their schools.

The Second Institute was held on the 11th and 12th days of December, at the Hall in the Academy at Northfield, in the County of Washington. The attendance here, of teachers particularly, was quite large, and a respectable number of Superintendents from the various towns in the County, with a small number of resident citizens was present. Mr. Beard, the Superintendent of Schools, was very active in promoting the objects of the session and securing accommodations for the teachers who were in attendance; he also gave an exposition of the practical effect upon his own school, produced by the introduction of gymnastic exercises as part of the daily routine. Rev. Messrs. Brown and Ballou of Montpelier, Dascomb of Waitsfield, and Hazen and Graves of Northfield, attended the meetings, and gave some assistance in teaching, and all encouragement to the work. During the session of the Institute, a division of the scholars in the Academy, under the lead of their teacher in that branch, gave a very interesting and satisfactory exhibition of the gymnastic exercises habitually used in the school.

The Third Institute began its session in the Hall of the beautiful Public School House, in St. Albans, in the County of Franklin, on the 13th December. This was the largest Institute that was ever assembled in this County, and one of the largest ever held in the State. The attendance of citizens was not as large during the day as might have been expected, but upon the evening sessions the attendance was very large. Much of the success of the meeting was attributable to the very great interest taken in popular education by the Rev. Charles Fay, who has been for several years the town Superintendent, and to his unceasing exertions during the session. Rev. Messrs. Perry of Swanton, Fay and Samson of St. Albans, and Mr. Mead of the Graded School in Swanton,

by their presence and by their assistance in the work of the Institute, gave valuable aid. Mr. Taylor, Principal of the Graded School in St. Albans, was present, and exceedingly active in rendering all necessary aid.

The School House, in which the Institute assembled, and of which a picture has appeared in a previous report, is one of the most elegant and convenient public buildings in the State, and is an enduring monument of the liberal and wise public spirit of the citizens of St. Albans. Some five hundred children, under the instruction of eight teachers, daily congregate here, and the throng of happy children, at the sound of the bell, converging here from every direction, affords at once an exceedingly pleasant view to every thoughtful observer, and an ample illustration of what may be done under the State system of public schools where the will exists to profit fully by the advantage which it affords. The different sessions of the Institute were enlivened by music, mainly given by the children of the school, but once or twice through the kindness of a choir of older singers. The Institute seemed satisfactory and successful.

The Fourth Institute was held at Underhill, in the County of Chittenden on the 18th and 19th days of December, and though thinly attended at first, increased continually in numbers to the close. The preponderance of young people in the audiences is always a marked chacteristic of the Institutes, and this was particularly the case here. Rev. Messrs. Livingston and Pierce, of Westford, and Hough of Williston, with Mr. French of the Underhill Academy, and Mr. Lawrence of Burlington, all connected with the schools as Superintendents or teachers, were in attendance, and cordially co-operated to promote the success of the session.

The Fifth Institute was held in the Town Hall in South Hero, for the County of Grand Isle, on the 23d and 24th days of December. Notwithstanding the difficulty from the peculiar topographical character of this county, of selecting a locality that shall equally convene all parts, the attendance upon the Institute was unusually large, every town in the County being represented, and quite a large proportion of the Superintendents and teachers being present. The general attendance of citizens, the character of the school-houses, and the comparatively high rate of wages paid to the teachers, all indicate a more than common interest in educational matters as characteristic of the County as a whole. There are few, if any, sections of the State, where a thoughtful and practical discussion of topics that concern the welfare of the common schools, would receive a more general and discriminating appreciation, than in this beautiful County in the midst of the Lake.

The session of the Sixth Institute was held at the Congregational Church in Irasburgh, for the County of Orleans, on the 19th and 20th of January.

The attendance, both of teachers and citizens here was the largest that I have ever known in this County, a large proportion of the various

towns in the County being represented. Rev. S. R. Hall of Brownington, the pioneer in Normal teaching in New England, and ever a staunch and steadfast friend of educational advancement, was present, and contributed to the success of the session. Mr. Hall has attended every Teachers' Institute in thisCounty since the organization of the Board.—Rev. P. H. White, a member of the Board was also present, with Rev. A. A. Smith, Superintendent of Schools for Westfield; and M. R. Tyler, Esq., Superintendent of Irasburg, exerted himself actively and successfully in furthering the work. The Institute seemed to be well received and to leave a good effect behind it.

The Seventh Institute occurred at Lunenburg for the County of Essex on the 22d and 23d days of January and was held under exceedingly unfavorable circumstances. The whole community had been so generally afflicted with sickness, that nearly every family circle was thus invaded; and every school in town had been suspended. Yet the attendance upon the Institute was quite large, and as usual, in this County, a good deal of interest in educational improvement was shown. Rev. Messrs. Sewall, Smith and Chickering attended and assisted and encouraged in the work. Mr. King, the Superintendent of Lunenburg and Mr. Boyce, Superintendent of Granby, were active and earnest in their co-operation, and the session was as successful as, in the prevalent affliction of the community, could have been anticipated.

The Eighth Institute was held at Peacham for the County of Caledonia on the 3d and 4th days of February and was the largest Institute that has ever assembled in that County. The session began in the hall of the Academy, but the attendance both of teachers and others was so large that a removal to the Congregational Church soon became necessary. Rev. Messrs. Boutelle and Eastman were in attendance, and Mr. C. O. Thompson, Principal of the Peacham Academy, was particularly active in contributing to the success of the Institute, and gave most valuable assistance in the instruction upon the two important topics of Grammar and Arithmetic. His cogent and practical views must have been of essential service to all practical teachers. Mr. J. P. Lamson, Superintendent of Cabot, attended with forty-one teachers from that town, and a number of the towns in Caledonia were largely represented.

The session of the Ninth Institute, for the County of Orange, was held at East Topsham on the 10th and 11th days of May. From the locality and from the inevitable shortness of the notice given, the attendance here was not as large as it has sometimes been in this County, but still was quite respectable in point of numbers, and particularly so as regards the interest exhibited. Mr. E. Conant of the Randolph Academy, gave instruction upon the topics of Grammar and Arithmetic, with his usual and well known ability. Rev. N. R. Johnston, the Superintendent of Topsham, was constant in attendance, and the Institute was well received.

The Tenth Institute began its session in the Congregational Church in Rochester for the County of Windsor, on the 10th and 11th days of

June. Here, although a locality somewhat remote from the more ordinary thoroughfares, the attendance and the convincing indications of great interest very generally shown, vindicated the reputation of the vicinity for an enlightened interest in the welfare of the school. Every effort for the success of the Institute was made by Dr. Belknap the present Superintendent, and throughout the session, while the attendance of teachers was good, that of the citizens was much larger than common. Mr. Conant discussed the topic of Grammar and also gave instruction in regard to other subjects, dwelling particularly on the proper method of conducting recitations. Rev. Mr. Herrick and Mr. T. B. Harvey, former Superintendent, were frequent in attendance, and Mr. Wing, Principal of the West Randolph Academy, ably assisted.

The Eleventh Institute was held in the Congregational Church in East Cornwall, for the County of Addison, on the 14th and 15th days of June, and was larger in numbers than any previous Institute in the County. Mr. B. F. Bingham of Brattleboro High School, discussed very acceptably and usefully the topic of Arithmetic, giving special prominence to mental arithmetic. Mr. Chandler of Middlebury gave a very interesting lecture on the elements of Geology. Cornwall being almost exclusively a farming town, the population is quite sparsely distributed, and the inconvenience of entertaining those in attendance from out of town at dinner, led to the provision for strangers of a pic-nic dinner during the mid-day recess of the Institute on each day, and thus furnished a very attractive as well as unusual feature of the Institute. Between two and three hundred were thus entertained each day. It is believed that the effect of the Institute here, to which the active exertions of Mr. Baker the Superintendent largely contributed, was very good.

The Twelfth Institute was held at West Poultney in the County of Rutland, on the 17th and 18th days of June, in the Methodist Church; and although not quite as largely attended as the Institute at Wallingford during the previous year, was still a very large gathering, and contained a very large number of teachers actually engaged in the schools of various grades in the County. Mr. Hitt of Rutland and Mr. Winslow of Pittsford, assisted in the Institute, and Mr. Moore of the Rutland Union School was present during most of the session. It was unfortunate that the time selected for the Institute here was just previous to the public examination of the Ripley Female College, located in this village, and thus the Institute was deprived, of necessity, of the aid of Messrs. Newman and Knapp, the Principals of this new and promising institution. Mr. Newman did all within his power for the success of the Institute, but was inevitably otherwise engaged and could not be present. The Institutes in this County have now for several years been larger than any other similar gatherings in the State, and this fact seems to have a natural connection with the fact that Rutland County is second to no County in the State for the steady improvement of her schools in the last ten years.

The Thirteenth Institute was held at Putney in the County of Windham, on the 21st and 22d days of June, and was a very large and very

successful meeting. Mr. B. F. Bingham of Brattleboro High School, gave a most able and useful discussion of intellectual arithmetic, that was exceedingly well-timed and must have been greatly useful to every practical teacher. Mr. Orcutt of Glenwood Ladies' Seminary, addressed the Institute on the use of gymnastic exercises in school, and the practicability of their introduction into the common schools. Miss Hyde, the teacher of gymnastics in Glenwood Seminary then gave an exhibition of the gymnastic exercises that are in use at that School, with a facility and grace that won universal attention and admiration. Rev. B. G. Northrop, the Agent of the Mass. Board of Education, who by good luck was able to be present, drew the attention of the Institute to the topics of spelling and of object teaching, which he discussed very instructively and usefully. Messrs. L. F. Ward of Westminster, and Rev. Messrs. Dwight and Herrick also assisted in the Institute, and the gathering was considered a very pleasant and useful one. Dr. Houghton, the Superintendent, omitted no necessary effort on his part and contributed largely to the general success.

The Fourteenth and last Institute was held in the Congregational Church in Peru in the County of Bennington, on the 24th and 25th days of June, A. D. 1864. The first Institute under the direction of the Board of Education, that was held in this County, was held in Peru, in 1858, and the contrast between the attendance then, and that upon the Institute of the present year gives the most satisfactory evidence of a great increase of general interest. The town was filled with those in attendance from abroad, and this attendance was composed largely of practical teachers. There were teachers present from the schools of four different counties. Rev. Mr. Perry of Shaftsbury, addressed the Institute on the best method of teaching spelling, and Mr. Charles Haynes of Peru gave one of the most practical and useful expositions of improved methods of teaching spelling to which I have ever listened, within or without the State. No possible effort on the part of the Superintendent or the citizens was spared to secure the comfort of all present, and the Institute was unusually successful.

The subject of the tendency and efficiency of Teachers' Institutes as educational agencies has been so often presented, and been dwelt upon at so great length in former Reports, as to make it unnecessary now to give much space to a general vindication of their usefulness. Accepted in all of the other States, wherever any educational advancement has been made, as entirely indispensable to wholesome progress, they have in the year just past as in former years, proved their title to the support and encouragement of the people of this State.

While in one or two of the counties, the attendance has been less than in the same counties in some former years, the aggregate attendance, taking the State as a whole, has never been larger than during the last year. And throughout the State, as much at least of interest in them has been shown by the body of the people as ever before; which,

taking into account the condition of the country and the engrossment of the general mind, is very strong evidence in their favor.

For the purpose of eliciting some evidence as to the general appreciation of the value of the Institutes, the School Registers, and the Annual Reports, a request was made in the statistical schedules, that the Superintendents of schools in the various towns would give frank expression to their views. And, in the extracts from the reports of the Superintendents to me, will be found a very general and decided commendation of all of these as educational agencies, and the testimony thus given is particularly full and decided in reference to the Institutes.

But perhaps the most conclusive testimony to the general appreciation of the Institutes, is to be found in the cordial and unstinted hospitality with which they have been invited and received during the past, as in previous years, in all parts of the State, often having been invited to revisit the same localities, and constantly received with prompt and ready courtesy.

The Institutes may be regarded as acceptable and efficient instrumentalities in the progressive advancement of school improvement.

## CONDITION OF THE SCHOOLS.

The reports to this department of the various Town Superintendents of Schools furnish the best means of obtaining a general view of the condition of the schools in the different localities. Hence, while it is impossible to insert entire these official reports, copious extracts are made from the reports returned, with the view of making such selection as shall present the condition of the schools throughout the State, and with especial reference to the smaller towns. And the failure to insert many returns that are made, arises mainly, although not entirely, from the imperative necessity of making such selection, and not at all from a design to slight any particular official or locality. Amid the diverse complaints, on the one hand that certain reports do not appear, and on the other that so much space is given to these reports, the effort is made to take a medium and judicious course.

The following are extracted from Superintendent's reports:

We are familiar with the line, "Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined," and in practical life, we conform our conduct to the principle it inculcates. The farmer or gardener in procuring the trees for his orchard or garden, selects those which are straight and beautiful, or, if compelled to take others, commences with their transplanting, the use of the necessary means to secure for them the form he desires. The lady, when setting plants in her flower garden, endeavors to secure them by stakes and hoops and fastenings, lest they should grow awry and disappoint her hopes.

So the parent should do, not only with respect to the bodies, but with reference to the intellectual and moral powers of his children. Would you have the mind active and well balanced, see that its powers are trained to act with promptness, and that each is educated in due proportion. Would you have the moral character symmetrical and attractive, see that no truant desire is unduly nourished to the neglect

of others. Let no love of gain supplant and override the higher and infinitely nobler desire to be useful. When *usefulness* is the end of education and every power is trained into subserviency to it, then man stands forth a worthy object of admiration.

Few, probably, will question the correctness of the position, that the training of the first years of childhood commonly shapes the character for life. It is equally apparent that the majority of the community receive their mental character chiefly in the common school. If, then, our schools are to furnish the education which most persons acquire, we cannot over-estimate their importance. They should have all the perfection and all the efficiency we are capable of imparting to them, and I trust the assertion will not be considered extravagant, that, as an educational institution, the common school may be, and ought to be, so perfect, as to render academies or other high schools unnecessary for the ordinary purposes of instruction. The truth of these remarks being admitted, then it is indisputable.

1st. That whatever the cost of procuring the best teachers, no others should be employed.

2nd. Money paid for the support of good teachers is wisely expended, while money paid to poor teachers is foolishly expended.

3rd. Our school houses should be made as attractive as possible, both as to their form and finish, and to the neatness and convenience of their grounds. They should also have all the furniture needful for illustration.

4th, Patriotism, equally with parental affection, urges to liberality and effort in improving our schools.

5th. Every owner of real estate is a richer man if he has occasion to pay a generous tax for the support of good schools where that estate is situated. Fellow citizens, the value of your farm is greatly enhanced by a good school permanently sustained in your district. I will not dwell on this thought, because I have presented it in a former report. But I will say, that every desirable citizen who contemplates purchasing a farm, will, among his first questions, ask, "Have you good schools?" The man who is indifferent in this matter, we ought to wish may find a settlement elsewhere than in our community. Would you be willing to have any man buy a farm adjoining yours, and move in as your next neighbor, who should be himself destitute of education, and indifferent whether you had a good or worthless school, or any at all? Would not your inference unavoidably be, that you could not expect that man to be a desirable neighbor? Would you not rather expect narrowness of dealing, rudeness of manners, and a disregard of the common civilities and decencies of life? Who in the circle of your acquaintance, are the men most engaged in broils, in petty strifes and feuds, and in vexatious litigations? Are they not the very men just named?

I have the pleasure of reporting to the town that our schools are prospering. In regard to the order, discipline, and the character of the instruction given, the past year has furnished cheering indications of improvement. In several of the districts, prudential committees and parents are showing increased interest by visiting the schools, and we are approaching uniformity in the several districts in raising all our money for schools on the grand list. Most of the districts have adopted this practice for years—the only method of supporting schools which will secure the education of the whole community.

And now, Mr. Secretary, after having for several years labored in the cause of common schools, under your leadership, induced by ill health, I retire from official service, with unabated confidence that our noble school system is destined to triumph, that its defects will be remedied, and its excellencies developed, till they culminate in perfection—the crowning glory of our Commonwealth.

LYMAN MATTHEWS, Cornwall.

---

Will not the State do something to aid in this matter? I cannot help feeling a lively interest in behalf of Normal Schools, from the fact that I was associated as teacher in

school for three years only three miles from the State Normal School, located in New Britain, Conn. Prof. Philbrick, now of Boston, was at the head of the school. Could the friends of education of this State visit this institution, and see the practical workings of the best methods of instruction and management of schools, I think they too, would be co-laborers with me in urging the early location and completion of a similar institution, where our sons and daughters may become thoroughly educated and trained for the work of teaching, governing and managing our schools.

As you solicit expressions of opinion respecting School Registers, Teachers' Institutes, and Annual Reports, I cheerfully comply with your wishes. If the opposition element will explain to me how a well regulated mercantile establishment can get along without having its day-book, and invoice-book, then I will explain in like manner how a well conducted school can get along without the School Register and Annual Report, for our School Register and Annual Report bear the same relation to our schools as the day-book and invoice-book do to the mercantile establishment. On the one hand we can see how we stand at the close of the year respecting our schools, as well as the merchant his capital stock invested on the other. If teachers, Superintendents, District and Town Clerks will do their duty faithfully, we can calculate with mathematical exactness whether we have lost or gained at the close of the year. I have attended three Teachers' Institutes, and can speak decidedly in their favor.

I think they are instrumental in accomplishing much good. They awaken thought and action in our teachers that could hardly be gained otherwise.

J. B. JEWETT, Granville.

---

The spelling book, reading, geography and writing have been evidently thought of some consequence, and we have had teachers able and willing to teach and explain all the branches of study which the law requires to be taught in common schools. A desire on the part of both parents and children for thoroughly competent teachers has predominated, and the result has been what might have been expected. Our schools have been about what they should be. The art of writing especially, which was almost totally neglected, has had a prominence in our schools during the past winter which I have been very glad to see. The scholars have made good progress, and our teachers have done themselves honor. There has been apparent, an anxiety not only to go through their several books of study, on the part of most of the scholars, but to go through thoroughly and understandingly. This desire to excel, I am happy to say, seems to have extended to all branches, and, with few exceptions, to all classes. The Registers have been kept more as they should be the past year than ever before in this town since I have been acquainted with its schools. This item is of the highest importance in every district, in order that the State may have a knowledge of the true condition of our schools. I have endeavored in all official intercourse with our teachers to impress upon them the importance of faithfully attending to this subject, and I trust my efforts in this regard have not been wholly in vain.

JOSEPH SARGEANT, Hancock.

---

I am happy to report a slight improvement in our public schools during the past year, and can but hope that it may continue and increase till our schools shall become what they in reality should be, the pride and pet institutions of the people of Vermont. As the people begin to understand the present law and the Register system, they are becoming more and more pleased with it, and less complaint is made about its being a "complicated system," &c. The various district clerks have shown a great improvement in the correctness with which they have answered the statistical interrogatories this year, showing that they have taken the trouble to read the interrogatory before appending the answer. The Registers for the past year present a much better appearance externally that heretofore, indicating care and neatness in their keeping on the part of the teachers. In reference to the Registers I would

ask, since they contain four times the space needed for a simple record of attendance in most of the districts, why the extra space might not be used for a record of recitations, and ruled accordingly?—thus perpetuating each scholar's standing in school and giving the parents of children the opportunity of knowing exactly how their children are in the habit of accomplishing their allotted tasks. I admit that a better, and in fact, the best way would be, for the parents to go to the school and see for themselves. Still I think the plan would be a good one. I think it would be a strong inducement for them to have their children at the school *in season*, to give them the requisite time for learning their lessons.

Your valuable report shows a fearful aggregate of tardiness and dismissals, and anything that will reduce them must be beneficial. The law authorizing the printing and distribution of your annual reports, ought to have gone one step further and made it a penal offence for every man with a family not to read it. If every man, woman and child in the State would but read it, I think it would produce now, the same effect in part that the Teachers' Institutes will by and by. We must wait for the next generation to receive the full benefit of the Institutes, as they are attended mostly by the young who do not have immediate control of the children.

W. G. PERRY, Leicester.

---

It gives me pleasure that there is evidently a decided and growing interest with the people in this town relative to their common schools, and the best course to be pursued in order to their improvement. The matter of school houses and their fixtures and surroundings is one of great importance, and has not received the attention it deserves. It is a fact, generally speaking, that you will find the best schools in the best school-houses. A neat, well arranged and pleasantly located school house, with necessary apparatus, has power, in and of itself to stimulate the mind of the pupil, and to incite it to action, while its influence over the teacher and parents and others concerned, engages their interest. Vigilant care and hearty co-operation are beyond estimate. The proper ventilation of our school houses has met with but very little attention. Only one school room in town has a ventilator. And as far as my observation has been in the school room for the twenty-five past winters, it is my humble opinion that a great proportion of the miserable health complained of is chargeable to this oversight.

GEORGE SMITH, Middlebury.

---

*Sir*, Perhaps my account, being so small, needs an explanation. 1st. I did not visit the summer schools, and spent but six days in visiting the winter schools. 2d. The Superintendents get but one dollar a day, and pay their own mileage, while the members of the Board get three dollars a day and have their mileage paid. Such discrimination is shameful, insulting, detestable, abominable. I do not demand that more money be drawn from the people, many of whom, yea, most of whom work hard with their hands, and are not rich, but I do demand that the Governor and other members of the Board shall have only the same that I do, when they serve the schools. Such legislation! It may be said there is the expense of board. But I think the Governor and his associates of the Board, could find a place at their meeting where they could get board for less than two dollars per day. Let them keep an account and have it allowed. For one (please understand) I am unwilling to be taxed to support "the dignity of office."

I am sorry that I cannot report more advance, on last year in common school interest. The truth is, such interest does not increase much in this town: yet there is an appreciable growth in this respect. One reason why this growth of interest is so slow is, that many of the wealthy families in town have no direct concern in the schools in that they have no children to send. This is so, because, in some families the children have grown beyond the period of attending district schools, while in others, there are few or no children. To a considerable extent, some schools are

made up of the children of tenant families that are mostly passive as to the condition of the schools. Another reason is, that the people have settled down into a sort of chronic sentiment, that anything of a school house will answer, however ill may be its construction or condition. Cheapness is the leading idea both in building and repairing school-houses. In this respect the people of New Haven are inconsistent with themselves. Wealth, taste, judgment and liberality, are evinced by the people throughout this town, in both their dwellings and out-buildings, to an extent not surpassed, perhaps, in any town in the State. But there is a sickening contrast between such buildings and their school houses. Still, I trust that the good people of New Haven will eventually open their eyes to these facts, and, moved by their characteristic pride, energy and spirit, will give their attention efficiently to school-house architecture.

The Registry system was commenced at the time I was appointed Superintendent, and I have carefully watched its working. At first there was much neglect and carelessness in respect to registers ; some teachers proving their utter want of fitness for their calling, by the slovenly manner in which they kept them, and some district clerks appearing to think that the registers did not require their attention, at least but carelessly. Steadily, however, increased attention has been paid to them, and the value of the registry system is getting to be appreciated. It is of the utmost importance that Superintendents should look to the registers and see that they are properly attended to by both teachers and clerks.

I am impressed with the great value of Teachers' Institutes, and would request that one be held in this town the present year.

WARD BULLARD, New Haven.

---

All the schools in this town, greatly need the encouragement which would come from an earnest interest in the education of their children, on the part of parents and guardians. Many among us, however, are too much occupied for this, with the "toil and tug of life." In this respect they are situated much like those who are beginning new settlements at the West, though, in relation to some things their condition is less favorable. Our soil is less fertile, and labor and cultivation yield a scantier product.

But we are not without some indications that the subject of Education is receiving increased attention. In general, pains are taken to procure good teachers. Higher wages are given than has been usual in past years, and the labors of earnest teachers are more justly appreciated.

On the other hand, the statistical report shows a state of things which must forbid the hope of realizing the full benefit of the outlay for schools, as long as it shall be suffered to continue. We report 162 scholars and an average attendance of only 79 1-4 —less than half. And then, from this average attendance of less than 80, the report gives over 3000 marks of tardiness. If the honorable and learned Secretary of the State Board of Education is acquainted with any method of rendering the common schools effective to the great end which it proposes,—the training of our children to knowledge and virtue, with such an amount of "*absenteeism*," and such a want of punctuality on the part of the now absentees, it is to be hoped, that he will not fail, at an early day, to lay it before the public. Till this is done, I see not how faithful teachers can be otherwise than much disheartened in seeing their best endeavors for the benefit of their pupils thwarted by the inconstancy and dilatoriness of their attendance.

CEPHAS H. KENT, Ripton.

---

The schools during the past winter have been better than usual. The teachers were all experienced, and were generally thorough in their methods of instruction. The confidence of community was very great in them, so great that several of the schools were not visited by either the committee or any of the patrons. There is another practice in community which very much needs correction, viz., the irregu-

larity of attendance so generally tolerated by parents. I have always remarked one thing in regard to the progress of scholars—the scholar that is punctual and steady in attending school always makes good progress, while on the other hand, a want of regularity is always followed by backwardness and dissatisfaction. It is a very certain way to destroy interest in the school, in the mind of the child, to keep him away from the school a considerable portion of the time, and especially when he is detained without any reference to the order or importance of his recitations.

Among the many good features of the School Law, that of having Teachers' Institutes in each County I regard as one of the best, for their influence through the teacher operates directly upon our schools. I do not believe there is a teacher, I care not how much experience he may have had, who can attend one session with his mind open to conviction and instruction, and, at its close, can say that he has failed to receive any benefit in the way of suggestions in relation to better methods of teaching or more keenly felt the responsibilities which rest upon him as a teacher. And to young teachers and those contemplating teaching, I consider their value inestimable. And if community at large would more generally attend them, they would find that their scope is sufficiently large to include another class who need a little "stirring up." I have never yet met the person that has attended a session, or even a part of one, but what was in their favor. Upon what does the future rest if not upon the future generation? In our common schools may be found the future of America. But who can grasp the thought? Who can tell what mighty forces are even now slumbering in the undeveloped minds of countless children, which are to influence the future of men and nations? In the future of America is to be realized the highest hopes of a more perfect state of existence. And upon the teacher of our common schools rests, in a great measure, the responsibility of training and disciplining these minds. When we consider what an influence the teacher has over those committed to his care during that most impressible period, childhood, and the extent and duration of that influence, the profession of teaching assumes an importance that attaches itself to few other professions. Hence, any measure or institute which has for its object the elevation of the standard of teaching, or qualifying teachers for the better discharge of their responsible duties, should be cordially supported by the community.

T. BROOKINS, Shoreham.

---

As the result of all the observation I have been able to make, both by personal visits and inspection, and by a knowledge obtained in other ways, as it regards the improvement made in our public schools during the year past, in the several branches of study pursued in each, also, as it regards the government, order, and discipline of the same, I feel a great pleasure in being able to make a favorable report.

At no time since my official connexion with the public schools in the town of Weybridge, has their condition, in all respects, in my opinion, been as good as at the present time. The prudential committees in the several districts, have been fortunate in having procured teachers well qualified to teach. In all our public schools there is a great deficiency of school books. A considerable number of the pupils are obliged to depend on others for the use of their books. This is not as it should be. This deficiency in all our public schools should be speedily remedied. Every pupil should be furnished with books, such as are needed, that no one for the use of a book in school should be dependent upon another. It is important that parents and guardians should look to this matter, and see that the children committed to their care, to be educated, are supplied with all the books necessary for their improvement and progress in their studies.

It is recommended to district committees, when they engage teachers for our district schools, to enjoin upon them the duty of complying with, or properly respecting the laws of the State, which requires a public examination for teachers to be held twice a year, and which all persons designing to teach in the common schools of each town, respectively, are invited and expected to attend, according to notice previously given by the Superintendent.

For the encouragement both of teachers and pupils, our public schools should be frequently visited by parents and guardians, and others interested in the cause of education. The school registers in this town show a great deficiency in this respect from year to year. This is not as it should be. Our public schools should be faithfully visited and the teachers looked after more diligently than they are, by all who are interested, as all should be, to promote the right education of our children.

No effort should be spared and no expense withheld that is found necessary to obtain *competent teachers* for our public schools. Teachers should be sought after who have not only a sound and thorough education as it respects the several branches of study to be taught, but who have also good manners and morals. And no others should be employed to teach our children. Let Prudential Committees look well to this matter, and act accordingly, and let the inhabitants sustain them in such a course; and our public schools from year to year will continue to rise higher and higher in importance, efficiency and usefulness, to the community around them.

SAMUEL W. COZZENS, Weybridge.

---

I will simply add to the above statistics that the common schools in Whiting during the past year, have, in some respects, shown an advancement over those of the preceding years.

I am fully persuaded that much depends on the aspect of the school house and its surroundings, and that just so long as we shall devote the best of our time and energies to the building of warm and comfortable houses for sheep and horses, to the utter neglect of school houses, just so long will our schools be inefficient and unsatisfactory. The school houses in this town are in many respects unfit for use, being placed in such close proximity to the highway as to leave no room for yard or shade trees, while within it is even less attractive, the desks being made of plain pine boards, guiltless of paint, and, failing to command the respect of the scholars, who have for successive generations displayed their Yankee ingenuity in the art of carving until their original form could hardly be recognized. And yet here our children are to spend the greater part of their earlier years, here receive impressions never to be effaced.

We have paid higher wages to teachers the past year than has ever been paid since my connection with schools, which I deem a favorable omen, showing that the people are beginning to realize that the *best* teachers are the cheapest, even though obtained at greater cost.

I am greatly in favor of Teachers' Institutes, and have endeavored to use my influence to induce teachers and all other friends of education to attend them.

W. H. CASEY, Whiting.

---

The more I have seen of different schools, and contrasted one with another, the more forcibly am I impressed with the vast difference between a good and a poor school, and the more perfectly satisfied that the best is the cheapest. It is not every mechanic that can make good shoes, nor is it every scholar that can teach a good school. The mechanic may tell you the theory of making shoes, and yet fail when he attempts to put that theory into practice. So a scholar may know what is in the books, and yet not have the faculty to teach it to others.

I wish in this my closing official communication to say to you, urge on the people of Vermont the vast importance of encouraging and supporting the very best teachers, and the best regulated schools.

A. G. McKEE, Arlington.

---

Notwithstanding the mighty contest for freedom now going on in this country, which demands so large a share of public attention, there still seems to be no abatement of interest in the cause of education among the people in this locality. On the contrary I am happy to report that there seems to be an increased interest in this important subject. Our people, as if conscious of the truth uttered by Napo

leon, that, "the only *real* victories are those which leave no regret or remorse are victories of knowledge over superstition and ignorance," are now moving for the establishment of a union school; which movement, I sincerely hope and trust, will be attended with success. There are also other indications of an unusual interest in this cause, among which I may mention the manifestation of an increased interest in the examination of teachers, and a more earnest inquiry after the *time* and *place* of holding the Institutes. There seems to be a determination on the part of those friends of education who have never attended one of the Institutes, to do so at the first opportunity, and as to those who have, they resolve never to fail of attending any one which shall come within their reach. All this movement, however, only seems to make some barbarous practices among us appear the more prominent, as the effulgence of the sun renders the dark spots upon that luminary the more noticable. I will mention one of the practices which I allude to. Strange as it may seem it is nevertheless true, that there are some parents, even in Vermont, (for we have them here) who seem to be totally indifferent as regards the education of their children. Now what should be done in such cases? I submit whether something may not be done by way of legislation to remedy these evils. Surely something ought to be done to bring these children within the legitimate influence of our common schools.

JOHN CURTIS, Dorset.

---

The interest in the schools in this town is increasing, and our schools are improving. The citizens in general are very well satisfied with the workings of our present school law, and would be far better satisfied if all of section 50 of said law after the word "provided," was repealed. There are majorities, in about one half of the districts, who in order to save a few shillings, avail themselves of the provisions of said section, and vote to defray the expenses of fuel and teacher's board on the scholar, which I think is entirely wrong in principle and decidedly prejudicial in its results. It casts a heavy burden on the poorer classes, and the result is, the schools are generally provided with green beech wood—the bane of every school.

RANNEY HOWARD, Manchester.

---

We need the Teachers' Institutes right among us to get near where we ought to be. I think they are one of the most life-giving incentives to action that we have. I have heard a number speak of trying to have the Institute here the coming season. It appears to me as if that was moving in the right direction. It would not take much to move the hearts of the people in behalf of the young, as the future of our nation depends on the healthful training of those just coming on the stage of action.

The school law, in the main, works well, and so far as I know, is gaining in the estimation of the real friends of education. I think the school registers if persevered with, will be instrumental in working out for the State a great reformation in educational matters. Properly kept, they show real evils as they actually exist, and that certainly is what we need; for how can we legislate against errors unless we know what they are. Some complain of the difficulty of keeping them, but a few suggestions from the Superintendent showing their importance will insure in nearly all cases a correct report.

The annual report made to the town last year did much for the schools this year, (I am sorry to say that it was the first one that we ever had) and seems to be just what the people need. If the annual Reports of the Board of Education could be read by every man in the State, there would be a glow of light coming from Vermont.

D. M. PRIEST, Peru.

---

Our schools have been prosperous this year. The teachers were with scarcely an exception, zealous and faithful. Yet I doubt whether they fully appreciate the high position which educational interests are attaining. I think they are susceptible

of much improvement in the manner of educating. But one of our teachers attended the Institute at North Bennington. They have not been accustomed to give attention to the call, and, having never availed themselves of the benefits attending such gatherings, are not aware of the great loss they sustain by such neglect. The teachers are not sustained and encouraged by the patrons of the schools as they should be. The parent reviews his flocks and herds and crops daily, but the child goes to school the whole year without once seeing the parent's face in the school room. Prudential Committees rarely enter the school room. Having placed the teacher there the work is done, and the teacher plods on day after day with little encouragement and sometimes with very little sympathy. I think, however, the fault is diminish ing.

J. M. BACHELDOR, Pownal.

---

Our schools the past year, as a whole, have, I think, made commendable progress. Some have been well managed on the part of teachers. While there is of course, more or less lack in that ability which makes up the complete teacher, I believe our schools suffer most from neglect of patrons. The Registers show but few names of parents as visitors, though I am glad to be able to say the interest seems increasing a little in this direction.

There is no school apparatus in town, neither globes, charts, or maps are found in any of the districts, and the lack of a complete dictionary is quite apparent. These articles being supplied would alone do much to elevate the character of our common schools. The Registers are well received and kept by the teachers, some, however, too carelessly to give with accuracy the information they are intended to. And the clerks' answers are as various as the interpretations they give the questions. One gives as the amount of money raised upon the Grand List some $70, another 62 cents, and a third leaves the answer blank.

Teachers' Institutes are coming to be esteemed, and our teachers attending last year returned refreshed from the repast, and benefitted by the counsel given. The hope is, Readsboro will partake more fully the spirit of school reform which is now manifesting itself in the State at large, and ere long place her common schools upon a standard comporting better with the advancement of the age, the dictation of experience, and the common welfare of her children.

J. B. LEARNED, Readsboro.

---

In conformity with your request I will make a few remarks in regard to the condition and prospect of the various schools in this town. That the condition of our schools is good comparatively is true; that they are much better than in former times, we do not doubt, but that they are the best which we can afford—that they are "good enough," because they are "as good as they were thirty or forty years ago"—that they have attained their true elevation, and hence can make no further progress, we stoutly deny. And here we arraign parents as being the cause, for the most part, of that indifference, inattention and utter want of interest too often manifested in some of the schools of our town and State; and that for two reasons: first, because, having the means, they do not employ those means for best the good of their children; and secondly, because they do not unite their influence as parents with that of the teachers when employed in the effort to sustain a healthy state of public opinion. In regard to the first, we would say that children need a comfortable, yes, a pleasant and attractive place in which to study, in order that they may not early learn to dislike study, and the associations of school life. But what is the fact? Oh! Parents must have their grain cradles, mowing machines, and the like, must have their flower gardens and shady walks, will plant the maple, the elm, the evergreen, to make home pleasant, and to beautify and adorn it, and attract the passer-by, but they never bestow one single thought, no not one passing glance upon the old school house that stands so near the highway, so uninviting, so unattrac-

tive, with no ornaments within or without; no globes, out-line maps, or books of reference of any sort, with the cold winds of winter whistling through the crevices in the doors, floor, ceiling and windows, and with no play ground, not even a tree, under which the children may play and be sheltered from the scorching rays of the summer sun. Whether parents can be made to believe it or not, we do know, that upon the likes or dislikes, upon the interest or disgust, cherished or felt for the school house and its surroundings in early life, will depend to a very great extent, the future character of the child.

On the whole we think the schools of this town are in far better condition today than we have ever before known them. Teachers are better qualified, also more thorough and systematic than formerly. Parents, too, as a general thing, are getting roused up to the necessity of employing competent teachers. And we sincerely hope the dawn of that coming day is not far distant, when all the friends of education will rally, putting forth one common, constant, and united effort for the advancement of the cause of education, that we may have a generation of true men, prepared to act well their part on the great battle field of human life.

J. N. WISEMAN, Rupert.

---

Properly kept, I think the Register is a reliable source of valuable information—just the kind of information we want.

I also notice that there is an increased interest manifested in our schools by the parents, which seems to me to be a move in the right direction. For when parents visit the school and see for themselves how their scholars are progressing, and look over the register, then they will begin to be interested in our school and to realize how much is being done in our State for the advancemont of the cause of education.

In regard to the Teachers' Institutes, I think they are just the thing for teachers to attend, for, by means of them such teachers as have had but little experience in teaching, can get that information which they otherwise could not get short of considerable experience in teaching. And to see how much the Institutes are doing for the cause of education, one has only to visit the schools of those teachers who have attended the Institutes and those who have not.

WM. J. HAMILTON, Sandgate.

---

The condition of our schools for the past year has been only passable, about an average, I should think. We have good teachers, but unfortunately, the services of the best were not secured the past year, at least to a limited extent only. It is too often the case that Prudential Committees are nominated in school meeting—which is generally equivalent to an election—by some one who has a friend whom he wishes as a personal favor to teach the school and who will teach for low wages, the question of thorough competency not being considered; and thus in many instances, incompetent persons teach our children, whilst good teachers are "left out in the cold."

The importance of the school Register seems not to be as generally appreciated as it should be. I have labored the past two years to impress upon teachers the importance of carefully fulfilling the requirements of the Register, but seemingly with little avail, for they are returned this year, in most instances bunglingly kept and showing ill usage unworthy the intelligent teacher. The clerks do no better, indeed worse, their answers to statistical interrogatories being very bunglingly, and, in many instances, manifestly incorrect, adding greatly to the labor of the Superintendent, and marring the accuracy of his report. So much was this the case with the fractional districts belonging to other towns that I found it impossible to collate any thing from them. The annual reports of the Secretary of the Board of Education are read considerably, and I am confident exert a good influence.

G. T. SHANKS, Winhall.

Taking our schools as a whole, I think that more than common success has attended them for the past year. Much carefulness has been taken by the teachers of the Registers. Nearly all have filled them according to precept. Not many of our teachers have attended the Teachers' Institutes during the past year. All but three terms have been taught by female teachers, and success has generally attended them.

A. P. WALTER, Burke.

---

Taking all the adverse circumstances into consideration, I think we are making some improvement in the right direction. Although parents and committees have not visited schools as often as could be desired, there still appears to be an opinion gaining ground that the best of our citizens are not too good for school committees, and that the best teachers are the cheapest. A lack of furniture, apparatus and other articles necessary to facilitate the instruction of children, is plainly indicated by the Registers. I hope when the war is over we shall be more liberal in supplying the deficiency.

I think it would be a move in the right direction to have all school officers elected by ballot instead of being elected by nomination as is now generally practiced.

NELSON MORRIS, Kirby.

---

I am happy to be able to state that amid all the excitements of the day, our school interest has not been allowed to decline; the people seem willing to give a proper estimate to its importance and especially regard the cause of education in the town. The important good secured by our educational operations are sufficient to encourage increased interest and effort on the part of all. There are various simple and practical means within the reach of all by which the character of our schools could be elevated and their efficiency increased. Among these, a more full attendance upon the annual school meeting is prominent, and the interest felt and the attention that parents give to constant attendance of their children at the school room. In making our schools all that could be desired, an efficient co-operation of the friends of the cause in each district should receive increased attention. Prudential Committees, parents, and all friends of education should often visit the schools in their respective districts, observe the order and manner of teaching, deportment and proficiency of the scholars, and evince an interest in the success of the school. The interest we feel and manifest in the subject of education, will secure to ourselves a grateful remembrance. Under an earnest and well rectified public sentiment, with the intelligent and efficient co-operation of the friends of the cause in each district, we shall soon reap the reward which our fathers have proffered us in this vitally important work; and our common schools will become what they were intended to be, the greatest of our civil and social blessings.

M. C. HENDERSON, Lyndon.

---

The Institute held here in February was a great blessing. A new spirit has been infused into parents as well as teachers. The incubus of effete customs still rests heavily upon our schools. Cheap teachers are still somewhat in demand. The teacher boards round in some districts, and some quiet gentlemen still deny that schools have made any progress in fifty years. The rapid decrease in population, due to emigration and the war, has a depressing effect on the public energies, and is felt in the schools more than is right; for, if all our young people must leave for the West, how great a thing it is to give them the best of schools. In this way we can do more to keep public morals pure, in the vast new countries, than by ages of missionary enterprise.

C. O. THOMPSON, Peacham.

Of school houses I can say, that a few of them are in good condition, but most of them are capable of improvement, and the schools would immediately reap the results of such acts. Then add a few dollars in useful apparatus, a standard dictionary, a globe, and outline maps, (and there are none of these in town) and it would pay well. Improvements in education have been numerous. No teacher can produce good results in his school, with poor and clumsy tools. Text books, globes and maps, and all the improved apparatus of the school-room, for the purpose of explaining the power of thought, and facilitating the path of knowledge, are his tools, his instruments to work with. How important, then, that they should have them and that they should be the best. Surely, the farmer would not think of sending his hired man into the field to work with the implements of agriculture of a century ago. Teachers should be used as well. We have had some cheap teachers, and consequently, some cheap schools. One teacher was engaged for 75 cents per week, but, provided she taught a good school, she was to have 8 cents more. The idea of only 8 cts. difference between a good and a poor school! Though some poor teachers have got into our schools, yet, some of them have been experienced in the work, and have manifested a commendable zeal. We have had a few model teachers; they have been practical; they have taught many things not in the school-books, but things necessary for the school of life. May their numbers increase!

I think very much of the Teachers' Institutes, and Annual Reports. They are exerting a good influence on our common schools. It is a truth, that our most successful teachers are those who have attended Teachers' Institutes. Our School Registers are kept better each succeeding year, which, of itself, is encouraging. I think the manner in which a Register is kept is a pretty sure indication of what the teacher is. I would sooner abandon anything else in our present school law, than our School Registers. Our best teachers would hardly know how to dispense with them.

W. L. PEARL, Sheffield.

---

Our schools in St. Johnsbury under the influence of the recent modifications of the school laws are generally improving. In some of the smaller districts the progress is slow, while in others the change has been very marked and gratifying to all familiar with their former condition. In District No. 1, in which the schools were graded several years since, the improvement has been most conspicuous. The High School and several of the lower grades under the care of teachers employed through several consecutive terms, and some of them through several years, are doing their work admirably, and will, in due time, I am confident, by the exhibition of what they can accomplish, procure a better quality of schools throughout the entire town. A model school that may be visited and frequently seen by teachers and parents in its vicinity, is one of the most effective agencies that can be employed for the improvement of every other school or state. Hence the establishment of graded schools in our larger villages is gradually accomplishing good results, not only for their immediate neighborhoods, but for the entire State. Much more, obviously, might be done in Vermont in this direction. A large number of small villages which have hitherto done nothing in this way, might substitute the graded schools for what they now have, and, without any burdensome expenditure, greatly improve the means for educating the children committed to their care.

One of the chief hindrances to the improvement of most of our schools is the introduction of a new teacher at the commencement of almost every term. How a change in this practice can be effected, with the limited means possessed by many districts for retaining a permanent and successful teacher, is not readily seen; and yet something can, manifestly, be done in that direction.

Only three male teachers have been employed in the schools of this town the past year, and the schools taught by two of them have been the least satisfactory of any. My observation leads me to the conclusion that our female teachers, as a class,

are much better qualified for their work, have more maturity and experience, than those of the other sex. I think all of our common schools in Vermont may be entrusted to the instruction and government of female teachers without diminishing the efficiency of their discipline or their usefulness in any particular.

J. K. COLBY, St. Johnsbury.

---

As respects the schools for the past year in this town they have done well ; we might have wished them better in one or two instances. But in all branches of business there are some failures. If they sometimes occur in schools it is no more than is to be expected. But failures have occurred less frequently of late than in former years. The process of visiting and reporting schools and teachers, has kept out many poor teachers whom we might otherwise have had in our schools. School committees and parents evince too little interest in the visiting of schools. Scholars, faces too seldom brighten in anticipation of company ; yet there seems to be a good degree of interest manifested by our scholars generally. Since the introduction of new school laws and a better classification of school books, much progress has been made. Many common school scholars will compare favorably with those who formerly attended High Schools. The older class of teachers, unless they have studied to keep pace with the times, find themselves unfitted to keep school now. While they have slept the world has moved ; they have remained stationary while the schools have greatly advanced.

J. M. PILLSBURY, Sutton.

---

The past year has been one of great success in the schools of this town. Teachers seem to understand their duty better than ever before, therefore Registers have been better kept—fewer mistakes. The district clerks also begin to understand their duty, and most of them seem disposed to do it. I find the teachers who attend the Institutes better qualified for teaching than those who do not. But we need something to awaken an interest among parents and the people generally. I am happy to say that there is an improvement in the common schools from year to year. There seems to be a waking up to the importance of schools, and that the rising generation should be well educated.

CHARLES A. STEVENS, Walden.

---

Decided progress has been made in our schools the past year. Better order has been maintained and a good degree of regularity in attendance. In some of the districts a large proportion of the parents and others interested in schools have visited the schools. The teachers and clerks have been more faithful in keeping the Registers. But while our schools have made good progress, it seems to me there are yet a few defects in the present law, which, if remedied, would increase its utility. I think, as I have stated before in former reports, that the entire expense of the schools should be supported on the Grand List. I can see no good reason why the property of our state should not be made to support the schools.

R. J. MORSE, Bolton.

---

I think there has been, in many respects a very gratifying advance in our schools during the past year. One very encouraging fact, is, the people are beginning to take a deeper interest in the education of their children. Parents have visited the schools more frequently, and greater solicitude has been manifested in regard to the employment of competent and experienced teachers, and in other respects there have been cheering indications. I think there has been also a very marked improvement on the part of teachers in their mode of imparting instruction. Teachers have been less confined to the text-book—the blackboard has been more freely used, and

on the part of some of our teachers, an effort has been made to break away from what may be termed the old stereotyped method of instructing classes. As a result new life has been imparted to the scholars, and both schools and parents have been interested. Still there is abundant room for further improvement which we hope to witness in the years to come.

C. M. SEATON, Charlotte.

---

We have had no marked failures of teachers during the year, and only one or two right poor schools. Neither have we had a *model* school. The pressure from tax payers to make the expenses low, is heavy, and teachers of moderate qualifications and small experience have been mostly employed. Teachers who have incurred expense in fitting themselves to teach, have not been employed. A result is, we have lost in scholarly interest and ambition in the schools, and among the people too. For no means is more effective in exciting such ambition in school and out of it, than the presence, work, and habits of ambitious, scholarly, and studious teachers. When such are not employed the interests of education decline. I think ours have declined within a year past.

The Registers are doing a good work, by *compelling* some of our people to see the *facts* in relation to our schools, at least once in a year.

It has been so long since we have seen, or heard of, except at a long distance, a Teachers' Institute, that we are not qualified to express an opinion upon them. If our good friend, the Secretary, will have one in our town this year, we will tell what we think of it next year.

The report contains a great amount of matter and argument, useful for consultation and reference. I have thought that if it were intended for general instruction and incitement, it might be more read, if it were condensed. For myself, however, I like it as it is. C. E. FERRIN, Hinesburgh.

---

The benefits of a good common school education are being appreciated in our town. I find a growing interest manifested in the cause of our common schools. We are beginning to see, that in this age of the world, if we lack for an education to fit us for the common duties of life, it is not chargeable to our want of privilege, but to our own slackness and want of interest in our own behalf. We have a school law, the working of which extends its blessings to the children of the poor as well as to those of the rich. The condition of the schools is very good. Still, an improvement *must* be made, and it must be the result of earnest endeavors by the people, scholars, teachers, and superintendent. Is not the cause of education worth more than a passing notice? We must give more thought to this subject, and *action* is the result of sober reflection. We cannot over-estimate the value of the School Register, when properly kept. It records the true state of the school, and is an index of its prosperity. Superintendents should make an annual report to the town. It would be well received. They should set forth the facts as they are, that the people may know the true condition of schools in town.

GEORGE W. SAYLES, Huntington.

---

The public sentiment of this town, with regard to educational matters has improved in the course of the last three or four years, and as a consequence, the common schools have also improved. Our schools cannot well be better than what the people would have them, and any course that might be taken to enlist popular feeling in their behalf, would tend directly to their improvement. As a means of bringing about such a result, I think the instrumentalities provided by the school law are doing their work well. At least, a respectable minority of our citizens are becoming interested in Teachers' Institutes, Teachers' Associations, Educational Lectures, &c. The Annual Reports of the Board of Education are perused by many of our thinking men and women, and the facts therein elicited have brought some to their senses,

to see how such and such errors can be remedied. The school Registers are also doing their work, and I think are rather pioneers in the cause, as without the facts that are brought to light through them, we would hardly know how to shun many of the errors that exist. My best teachers would not do without them, as they say they are their "Day Books" in their business. I have no trouble in having them properly filled, so far as teachers are concerned. A part of the district clerks, however, fail. I would suggest that the question "How many scholars have lacked necessary books?" be inserted for teachers to answer. Personally, it would please me, as I have always taken pains to ascertain the fact, in order to lay it before the town in my annual reports. At the same time it would expose to the public, an enormous evil in our schools.

D. H. MACOMBER, Essex.

---

We are troubled with short sessions of schools, just long enough to draw public money, thereby doing injustice to districts which sustain eight or nine months' school. For as long sessions show a smaller average, the law really allows a premium to short sessions. Otherwise, everything works well.

ROBERT J. WHITE, Shelburne.

---

During the past year our schools have been favored with the instruction of many excellent teachers and but few poor ones. The Teachers' Institute held in this town, December last, did much towards awakening an interest in our district schools, both among parents and teachers. The teachers and people generally appreciate the worth of the Institutes, and I notice a general desire among the teachers of this town to become better qualified for the performance of their duties.

A. C. ROBINSON, Underhill.

---

The common schools of this town have not yet arrived at a state of perfection; nor have they quite attained that position, which, under the new law, it is their privilege to enjoy. Yet, some of them are making rapid strides that way. The present law, in the main, works well. People are becoming accustomed to it, and there is decidedly, a more general interest manifest in schools. But some are still croaking and complaining of the oppression of some of the features of the law, prominent among which, is a monopoly in the sale of school-books. And I would respectfully suggest for your consideration, the importance of allowing each county or town to recommend, introduce, and govern the sale of their own school-books.

Parents do not take that interest in schools which they ought. If a teacher is successful in creating an exciting interest in school, then parents' visits are very frequent. But if there is nothing new, exciting or interesting in the management of the school, visits by parents are seldom, if ever made, which leads us to believe that their visits are made more for their own entertainment than for the benefit of the school.

J. H. MACOMBER, Westford.

---

The School Registers are gradually demonstrating their own importance, and in consequence, becoming more reliable. The teachers perform the labor of keeping them, cheerfully, and, in general, with much more accuracy than the District Clerks. It seems to me not only just, but very much to be desired, that the clerks should be paid for their services. A fair compensation to the clerk for his labor, would, perhaps, do something to prevent the incessant change in the clerkship, which is the grand hindrance to the successful working of that part of the school machinery.

The Institutes are very highly valued by teachers, and also by those of our citizens who appreciate the work of the common school. Some of our best teachers, after attending the Institute held at Underhill, last winter, declared themselves almost

unwilling to resume their schools, so greatly had the earnest words to which they had listened, magnified their conception of the noble and solemn work given them to do. I was not surprised, in subsequent visits to their school rooms, to find many of the suggestions made at the Institute, already embodied in their daily practice. The time devoted to the Institutes seems too short; the exercises are necessarily too brief and hurried; and consequently, teachers are able to carry away but a small portion of the many valuable hints there given, as to improved modes of teaching.

The Annual Reports, issuing from your office, are most valuable documents, and should be made of far greater service to the schools, than is generally the case. Could the facts, carefully gathered from the schools of the entire State, and therein presented, be brought to the attention of the people at large, they *could not fail* to awaken the popular mind to the importance of the common school work. But the great mass of the people derive no more benefit from the Report, than though it were printed in Sanscrit. *Very few teachers read it, and still fewer of their patrons.* Its startling facts never reach those, who most need to be startled. The same difficulty attends the operation of the Institutes, and County Teachers' Associations. Were an Institute to be held in this town each month in the year, there would be whole districts unrepresented, at its sessions, and those the districts where it is most essential the truth should go. It is a difficult problem to bring the facts, which are being developed by the workings of the present school system, to bear upon that large mass of the people, that will not read printed Reports, and will not attend educational meetings. In the endeavor to supply in a measure, this "missing link," I have held meetings, during the winter, in several of the school houses of the town, at which I have discussed, so far as could be done in a single evening, the grosser forms of that neglect, with which the common school is so generally treated. The experiment, though but partially tried, has not been without success. The meetings were most fully attended in the more remote districts, and some good results are already visible. People were naturally surprised to learn that there were over 12,000 absences, and nearly 5,000 tardinesses, in this town alone, within the last year, of which less than 28 weeks were occupied by the sessions of school; and that in consequence, more than one quarter of their entire expenditures for schools was a total loss. Some districts have even been induced to "consider the question" of making a small annual appropriation for the purchase of apparatus and school furniture. One of the two school-houses heretofore reported as "shameful," is to be replaced by a new one the present summer. Teachers' wages are slowly advancing. The length of the school term is being gradually increased. The tardinesses are fewer than last year by 298, and the idea is gaining ground in the minds of the people that good schools are the cheapest at whatever cost.

J. W. HOUGH, Williston.

---

Our schools, taken as a whole, have never been more prosperous than during the school year just closing. More good teachers have been employed; more ambition and energy have been exhibited by the pupils, and, as a consequence, greater advancement in their studies has been made, than in any previous year. To secure these advantages, and others still better, I have urged in lectures and in my annual reports to the town meeting, two prominent considerations, to wit: that the *best teachers* should be procured, and that parents should zealously co-operate with the teachers. On these two points "hang all the law and the prophets" in relation to having successful schools.

Teachers whose literary, moral and governmental qualifications are of a high order and who possess the requisite aptness in imparting instruction, in a word, teachers who are what teachers always ought to be, will make their schools tolerably interesting and useful, even when parents are indifferent and neglectful. How much more so when parents give them their sympathies, their active and zealous co-operation. To the teacher they have committed their most precious treasures. His aim and theirs is one and the same—the advancement of their children in learning, knowledge and

virtue, and he has a hard and responsible work. It is a very easy thing to find fault. Some parents seem to evince special gifts in this direction. It would be well if they had to exchange places with the teacher for a little time, that they might learn to appreciate the difficulties of his position—learn that they owe other and better duties to the school than scolding about it. Perhaps they find it difficult to manage a half dozen children. What then would they do if they had under their charge, as the teacher often has, forty or fifty?

By the co-operation of parents, I mean, the proper discharge of all the duties they owe to the school, to wit: the providing of a suitable school-house and grounds, ornamented and attractive, a sufficient supply of text-books, the regular and timely attendance of their children at school, frequent visits to the school room, to look after their deportment and progress, and thus spur them on to zealous emulation. These are affirmative duties. Not to find fault unnecessarily; not to take the part of their aggrieved children unwisely; not to throw *any* stumbling block in the way of the progress of the school—these are *negative* but equally positive duties.

Our schools have neither globes nor dictionaries, as they ought to have, and might have if parents would be a little more saving in things not needful. Nor have all the schools black-boards even. But I am hopeful that another year's report will not have this to say of them. Looking upon their past since the present school law came into force, I can see that there has been progress. And I cherish the faith that this progress will continue and accelerate.

GEORGE W. HARTSHORN, Canaan.

---

In thus taking official leave of our schools permit us to call your attention to the great change that has taken place in public sentiment within the past few years in relation to them; and first in the great interest manifested by committees and parents in the success of schools. A class of teachers who *then* would have been tolerated in schools, and would have been considered even passably good, are *now* found to be entirely behind the requirements of the times, and if employed are promptly dismissed to give place to others better qualified and more worthy their vocation. And this change will yearly become more apparent as Superintendent and committees shall continually insist upon, and demand, a higher standard of qualifications in those whom they employ.

The greater interest manifested by the people of many school districts in town, to provide better houses, and other accommodations for the health and convenience of the scholars, is a pleasing indication of an advance of public sentiment in the right direction. Within the last eight years there have been erected five new school-houses in town, and two others thoroughly remodeled and repaired. So that from having only two or three decent ones in town then, we now have at least nine or ten. And should those districts which have taken the initial steps in the matter, go forward in the work the coming year, the record will be still further improved.

Whoever is familiar with the history of our schools, must be aware that they are yearly suffering greatly from irregularity of attendance, and tardiness, the remedy for which lies to a great extent with the parents. Children may be unavoidably kept from school by sickness or other causes beyond the control of their parents, but a great proportion of absences and almost the entire amount of tardiness of scholars, might be avoided by a little care and attention on the part of parents. Parents are too apt to think that an occasional absence does not hinder the progress of their children very much, and so request or permit them to be absent from school, more or less, during the term. But did they reflect a moment they would see that for every day's absence, one or more links in the chain of their studies was being broken; and the connection being thus severed, the scholar finding himself falling behind his class and failing to understand his lessons, he gradually loses his interest in the school. Tardiness, the twin companion and ally of irregularity of attendance, is an evil, the effects of which, if confined to schools alone, would be bad enough; but when we

realize the fact that in thus allowing or encouraging our children to be tardy at school, we are surely, though, perhaps, unthinkingly, permitting them to form a habit, which will go with them through life, causing themselves and others much injury, we may begin to realize its demoralizing effects. The child who is taught to think it of no consequence if he is not at school till five, ten or fifteen minutes past the time, will, as he grows up, be led to take the same view only on a more extended scale in all the affairs of life.

The active, go-ahead boy, who is at school promptly every day, and in season, will make the energetic, stirring, industrious man, while the lazy, laggard boy, will as surely become the slothful, indolent one. We should teach our children that their honor, and our, too, is pledged to the teacher that they will be at school punctually, and we should insist, too, that the teacher be punctual in all his exercises, that our children may not be taught by his example, to form this vicious habit of tardiness, which leads to carelessness, slothfulness, idleness, and an aimless and useless life.

J. E. WOODBURY, Concord.

---

In conformity to your request to make such suggestions as might occur to me relating to our schools, I feel that mine is a difficult task to advance any new ideas. In regard to Teachers' Institutes, I think I am safe in saying that there is no one thing of so much importance, not alone to our schools, but to the State. It awakens an interest in the cause of education that cannot be otherwise done. The teachers return from the Institute with a higher sense of the responsibilites resting upon them, and enter their schools with more earnestness of purpose than ever before; are able to, and do accomplish much more in a given time than before their attendance upon the Institute. It not only benefits the teacher, thus acting directly upon the scholar, but it awakens an interest upon our schools never before felt by community at large. And were it possible for every town in the State to be visited by an Institute, it would awaken such an interest in the cause of education as was never before felt. No one can attend one as conducted by you without getting some new ideas.

The Annual Report gives us a knowledge of what is being done in other portions of our State for schools. And especially are all connected with our schools laid under deep obligations to you for the compilation of school laws in your last report, together with the forms and abstracts of the decisions of the Supreme Court upon school laws. Of the benefit of the School Registers, much might be said; but a thing so obvious, needs not that much should be said. In conclusion let me urge upon parents to see that their scholars are regular in their attendance upon school and also there punctually, as tardiness is one of our most serious evils.

A. R. BOYCE, Granby.

---

The schools in this town have, for the past year been quite successful, save in two instances, and then the cause of the partial failure was not so much from a lack of proper education as of age. In both cases the school contained a very large element of rude and boisterous boys, and the Prudential Committees, with a singular lack of discretion, employed very young and inexperienced females. The result may easily be anticipated—no order. Prudential Committees seem to err very much in their selection of teachers. They appear to think if a young girl has a good "*edication*," she must of necessity, be able to teach and govern any school. This is a serious error. No young girl, without experience, can properly govern a large school, the majority of the pupils being, perhaps some years older than their teacher. She cannot command their respect. Now, obedience is the first great lesson to be learned, and if this be not commenced in the first stages of education, it will never be learned and cannot be enforced without stronger coercive measures than parents at the present day are willing to permit. I would not be understood as discouraging the plan of employing female teachers, for I am convinced by actual experience, that a good female teacher will exercise a much stronger influence over a horde of unruly and mischievous boys than any male teacher possibly can. In fact, the very presence of

a lady in the school house will have a softening tendency upon otherwise rude and rough natures. But let the age of the teacher never be less than 18 years, and this age, combined with a lady-like and dignified demeanor, will always hold the affections and command the respect of any school.

The value of the present system of School Registers is hardly yet understood. Too much cannot be said in praise of this plan of securing statistical information. They are working a mighty reform. Instances of tardiness are becoming more rare; a wholesome spirit of emulation is taking the place of the former apathy which pervaded all our district schools. It is also a valuable means of communication between Superintendents, as an interchange of thoughts and opinions so necessary to a perfect understanding of the working of our most excellent system.

B. W. DODGE, Guildhall.

---

The schools in this town the past year have been, in my opinion, generally successful, and have made fair progress. But there is not sufficient interest manifested on the part of parents. They should take more pains to procure a good supply of the right kind of books, as good books are nearly, if not quite, as indispensable to the successful improvement of the scholars as a good teacher. The blackboards are nearly useless appendages in our schools, being generally pretty much devoid of paint. As exercise on the black-board is an important means of training pupils to be self-possessed and expert in bringing into practical use the knowledge they have gained by study, it is certainly necessary, in my opinion, that every school-house should have a good black-board.

The Registers have generally been well kept by the different teachers; but some of the district clerks are very careless and negligent in making out their returns. When kept as they should be, I consider Registers sources of valuable statistical information, and I think teachers should consider it one of the most important of their duties to see that their Registers are properly kept.

I think the Teachers' Institute is a great benefit to teachers and to all friends of education who attend it.

A. T. HOLBROOK, Lemington.

---

Our summer schools were taught by teachers of more of less experience, and were very successful. The past has shown us, that teachers of our own raising have understood our own ways better, known our wants, understood what will be expected and required of them better than strangers, and they have a reputation at stake at home. All wish to be honored in their own country. Acting upon these views, *all* of our teachers were employed from our own town for the winter, and while in session were unusually prosperous. This has been a sad winter with us. Diptheria and canker-rash have laid many low, taking three and four from several families. Every school was broken up. None kept longer than six weeks, and several were continued with only 5 and 6 scholars before closing. Notwithstanding this, our schools secured an average attendance of 85 per cent. The average of wages paid female teachers was $12 a month.

One of the benefits directly accruing from Teachers' Institutes, is the awakening of the public mind, leading the people, and especially the teachers, to see what they need. You suggested to us that it would be a wise outlay of money to purchase a town teacher's library. Accordingly we went about it, and have got quite a little library. Others see the benefit, and are subscribing, and we mean to have it very much enlarged.

How shall our schools be improved? I would answer, by the very means we are now using. One will suggest this or that mode of legislation. Another, a different set of text books, and so on, *ad infinitum*, all of which may be good, and even necessary. But how are we to secure them? Simply by the means we are now using, to wit, public agitation. All things will be as the people will to have them. The acts of the Legislature are but the acts of the people. We have a good common

statistics much more reliable. I only hope they will go on in the good way upon which they have entered.

The Registers indicate quite an improvement in regard to regularity of attendance. This item among others, shows this: Last year there were only three scholars in town who had no absences. This year there are twenty-seven. In one school of 37 scholars, with a term of ten weeks, there were during the term only 59 cases of tardiness and 9 of dismissal, and I have reason to know the record was kept faithfully. This result was due almost entirely to the efforts of the teacher. Let others go and do likewise. Our best schools, as usual, both winter and summer, have been taught by females. And yet for the less than 12 months taught by males they received $224, while for the more than five times that time taught by females they received $421,50.

Our schools are generally supported entirely on the Grand List. Only two districts report anything raised on the scholar.

GEORGE B. TOLMAN, Sheldon.

---

I think I see, in the public mind, indications of an increasing interest in the work of our common schools. The admirable group of schools, which are daily collected in the splendid building belonging to the village district, that is, District No. 4, is the centre of a useful influence working outwardly towards the surrounding districts. And whensoever the full effect can be realized, it cannot be otherwise than that better school-houses, better apparatus for teaching, and better accommodations for the scholars generally, will be demanded. Outside of District No. 4, there are not more than five school houses, which are at all suitable to the purposes of education. In not one is there a good and sufficient blackboard, in not one a set of outline maps or charts, in not one a globe, and none of them are furnished with proper outbuildings.

And yet with all these disadvantages, there has been improvement during the past year. In spite of manifold hindrances, and in the absence of needful helps, the teachers have, for the most part, labored faithfully and successfully. But how much more might have been accomplished with better arrangements for the comfort and happiness of the scholars, and the right educational appliances at the command of the teachers!

In the month of December last, a Teachers' Institute was held in this town by the Secretary of the Board of Education, and with the happiest results. People did not find out, until too late, what entertainment and instruction had been provided for them on that occasion, and hence the attendance was much smaller than it ought to have been, and than it would be again. But those, who were present, were amply rewarded, by the acquisition of larger and nobler ideas on the subject of education, by learning something about the best methods of teaching, by being informed in respect to the errors and defects of the management of our common school system. The Secretary possesses the art of inspiring teachers with his own enthusiasm, and I doubt if a simgle teacher returned to his or her work, without many valuable lessons to aid and direct him in his labors, and to increase his efficiency in acting upon the minds of his pupils. And all recognized, as they never did before, the grand sphere of the teaching profession, and that the faithful, competent educators of our youth have a beneficent mission, which as much as any other instrumentality, affects the welfare of the whole country, and perpetuates the free institutions of the Republic.

I have still, however, to complain of our district clerks and teachers, that they do not keep with accuracy and care the school Registers. Hardly any of them make the records, as the Law requires, and hence it is very difficult for the Superintendent to present a correct statement of the statistics of the schools, and no easy matter for the Selectmen to make an accurate distribution of the public money. So long as I continue in office I intend, hereafter, at the examination of teachers, and before giving certificates, to demand, as an indispensable qualification, that they un-

derstand how to keep the Registers, and that they promise, conscientiously, to do their duty in this matter.

CHARLES FAY, St. Albans.

---

There is evidence, I think, of a steady but slow improvement, during the past twelve months, in our common schools. They are, however, as yet by no means what they sholud be. In some instances, those called to instruct have failed, in aconsiderable measure, to accomplish what they ought. These failures have been owing, partly to the neglect of parents to sustain and encourage teachers in the discharge of their duties, and partly to deficiencies and lack of skill in the teachers themselves. There is still great need, both of a more intimate acquaintance, on the part of citizens, with the actual state of things in the different districts, and of an increased aptness to teach, on the part of teachers, in order that our schools may be made better.

Important help in this direction has been derived from the Institutes which have been held in the County during the past few years. Such teachers as have attended these educational gatherings, have gained a more adequate view of the dignity of their vocation, and of the need of thorough preparation for the right discharge of their obligations. They have been at the same time aroused; filled with new enthusiasm; thus better fitted for the performance of their daily routine of duty. The impulse thus received, at the Institute held in December, has usually been perceptible during the remainder of the winter sessions. Parents, too, have been reached. Gaining a deeper insight into the school system of the State, they have come to have and evince greater earnestness in promoting the cause of education, in the general diffusion of intelligence, and, not least, in providing suitable means for the instruction of the poor.

The *School Registers* are also doing, as I think, an excellent work in the same direction. They are leading many citizens to a better acquaintance with schools in their immediate neighborhoods. They reveal as well the good which is done, as the deficiencies which need to be supplied, and the evils which demand redress. As yet, however, they have not done all they are capable of doing. There continues to be great difficulty in getting accurate and reliable returns from every school. District clerks, and often teachers are negligent; they fail to give us accurate answers to the queries put to them, as they readily might and should. Much knowledge of the condition of our schools is likewise secured, and a deeper interest enlisted in education, by the *Reports* which are made from year to year. Those prepared for the annual Town Meetings, doubtless, prove beneficial, when the people can find time to hear them, and especially when they are printed and read. So, the Annual Reports made by the Secretary of the Board of Education are peculiarly adapted to effect good, and, I think, in this town have actually rendered important service, in diffusing more liberal and just views on the subject of education. They might, however, accomplish much more than they do, by a little effort on the part of district clerks. There is reason to fear, that they now fail to be read so extensively, or pondered so carefully as they deserve.

On the whole, I think the condition of our schools furnishes some occasion for encouragement. Our Graded Schools in particular, seem to be doing well. Much good is hoped from them. To all appearance, they are in a way steadily to elevate the standard of education in the community. They are meanwhile, as I trust, actually giving the rising generation a discipline, which will prepare for a better and more manly discharge of the responsibilities of life.

J. B. PERRY, Swanton.

---

Our town has been in the habit of appointing different individuals to superintend their schools every year. This has been a great evil. As soon as, or before the Superintendent had learned the duties of his office, his term of service closes, and an inexperienced individual takes his place. This inexperience in connexion with the bungling manner in which the district clerks make out their statements, and the er-

rors which characterize the teachers' statements, render it laborious to approximate to the truth. I have not the time to do the work which belongs to the district clerks and teachers. I shall know, however, better how to teach them their duty for the year to come, and hope to furnish a report which will be more satisfactory to myself and reliable, and therefore more acceptable to yourself.

C. B. CADY, Alburgh.

---

Our schools still run on in the old, backward style, of "boarding round" with one exception, and in some districts they draw wood, "round" and long, wet, green, or rotten, as is most convenient. In only one district has the teacher boarded at one place, and board and wood been furnished on Grand List according to law.

J. A. CHAMBERLIN, Grand Isle.

---

I think the working of our present school system is greatly improving our schools. The people here have not learned the value of a good system, nor do they take much interest in educational matters. Our school houses are old, and the universal practice is to hire the cheap teacher to put in them. Our children manifest very little interest in their studies, and are allowed to remain at home without any excuses.

Teachers I find poorly qualified for their offices. One I refused a certificate; two I put on probation;-two or three proved worthless in the school-room.

We have an academy here, *run down*, when I came here a year ago. For the past three terms our terms have averaged 30 scholars. We hope soon to have it changed into a Graded School. Can you send me some information on that subject? I desire to agitate the question a little before you visit us next fall. Please appoint the next Institute at this place.

J. G. BAILEY, Hydepark.

---

Mr. Secretary: On page 97, of your last Report, you say, "I suggest to the Board the expediency of an effort to secure such legislation as shall make the rendition of an annual report a portion of the regular duties of the town superintendents of schools." This is well—very desirable. It will do much for the schools in various ways. Of these ways, I may name one. The requirement will be likely to secure to that office *competent* men; and it will do something to *constrain* them to *so* perform their duty, as superintendents, that, out of their visitations, they will get materials from which to construct such report. The effect of the "legislation" would be better yet, should it require the report to be *printed*.

A man would hardly assume such a duty who was conscious of essential incompetency to bring a printed report before the public. Should the Board procure the passage of such a law, there is still a vital matter to be considered: where should this report be rendered? "To the town meeting?" This, you may say, "affords the only opportunity." Did you ever read such a report to such a meeting? And did you secure more by it to the cause of the schools, than attention to the reading? So far as the schools involve the *outlay* of *money*, these reports may come before town meetings, but, so far as the high educational and moral considerations are concerned, I hardly know where less can be gained, for them, than at such a meeting. Now why may not these reports come before *all* interested in them, and not simply before *voters*? I design (D. V.) rendering my next report on the Lord's day previous to March meeting, and shall try to have there the parents, the pupils, and the teachers, the history of whose schools is to be reviewed. This, to some extent, can be done. Think, now, how much more fitting such an audience and such a day, for this grand subject, than a town meeting! With such an audience, and with a properly prepared digest of the work of the year's schools, what scene should be more attractive, and what day so proper for such an exhibit? Will He, who when

among men, took children into His Divine arms and blessed them, frown on me for improving his day for the good of children now?

More; can you hope to succeed in the best training of the children, without the active co-operation of the *mothers?* Will "tardiness, absences, and defective moral deportment," disappear from the Registers of our yearly schools, if this class be not more interested in the school movement, than they have hitherto been? One of the good effects of the Teachers' Institutes is *through this class.* What teacher will not tell you, that the scholars are more regular in attendance, and are at school in better season, after one of the Institutes? Why? Were the children there to be aroused by the Secretary? Not generally; but their mothers were, and they returned to their homes stimulated to *do more* for the education of their children. Hence, the increased promptness, &c., of which the teacher spoke. Should not the results, then, of the yearly schools in which mothers have such an interest, be brought *before them*? And can any one suggest a day more fitting than the Sabbath, on which to do it? Then let him do it, and I, for one, will gladly adopt it.

JAMES DOUGHERTY, Johnson.

---

I think the cause of education is progressing finely in Morristown. There is less of that unmitigated evil of "boarding around," and a prospect that there is to be less, and that teachers will be treated more as beings wanting homes, than they have been. Three districts have tried the experiment of "one place" boarding.

There is also serious thought about converting the People's Academy into a kind of Graded School, or more properly, a High School, supported by the district. The plan meets with favor and perhaps will be carried out. With a school upon the correct basis, as this would be, and with a new school house or two that are likely to be erected the coming season, school matters would look very encouraging in this town. The fact that seven teachers have taught in the same district two or more consecutive terms, shows an appreciation of the not-changing principle. Moreover, the wages in each case were advanced. But there are faults to be found. Some districts need new houses very much; some houses need repairing; and it would be a fine thing if the appearances about the houses were made more pleasant and attractive, by the addition or making of a flower plot, for refinement's sake and the cultivation of taste.

GEORGE B. COCHRANE, Morristown.

---

Mr. Secretary: I am convinced that under the present school system our schools are making decided improvements from one year to another, and that a higher standard of excellence is attained. The past year in this town, the schools have been unusually successful and prosperous. Teachers have, with very few exceptions, entered into the spirit of their work with a degree of energy and faithfulness highly commendable.

I consider the keeping of the School Register very essential, I might say almost indispensable. For some years before the Law required that a list of scholars names should be kept and called each day, I had practiced it in schools where I taught, and found it had a good effect.

The Institutes are becoming more popular and very much more is said in their favor. I find it is hard to get the masses interested in these things as much as they should be. But when those that are interested cease to act there will soon come a lethargy over community that would be too horrible to mention. So, in order to keep the community alive on the most important subject that they meet, I think the Teachers' Institute indispensable, and also the Secretary's Report. We have a graded school in our village district that is flourishing finely. Some terms we have a large patronage from neighboring districts.

JOHN S. LORD, Stowe.

The schools in this town are steadily improving under the present school law. I had the office of Superintendent two years before the present system of school regulations, and four years since, and think the present system has done much for education in our schools. There seems to be an awakening interest on the part of districts to have more comfortable school-rooms. Since the year 1860, there have been three new school-houses erected. Others are thinking they must build or repair very soon.

I consider public examinations of teachers to be an excellent plan. The Superintendent does not have to bear that amount of censure (in some cases) which he otherwise would. I have practiced for the last two years having public examinations at the close of each school, which has worked favorably, serving as a stimulent to teacher and scholars during the term, knowing they were to have an examination, and that their improvement in the several districts would be noted in the Superintendent's Report.

N. B. PAGE, Waterville.

---

If it could be an act required by law that the superintendents should make a report of the schools just as they are, it might stimulate some sluggard ones to action. If anything ever raises the schools above their present common level, it seems to me that the present system will do it. There is, however, much prejudice to be overcome in most of the small towns, where a man is estimated by the extent of his farm or farms, and moral and intellectual worth is not taken into the account. I do not know as any better plan could be introduced relative to Reports and Registers.

H. HERRICK, Wolcott.

---

In regard to engaging teachers, it is safer to employ those who are known than those who are strangers. A teacher may have success in other schools, those in other towns, and fail somewhat in ours. It is not profitable to have a change of teachers every term. In the best schools in New England, teachers are engaged by the year, and continued from year to year. In some instances in this town, teachers have been employed in the same schools for a year, and in one district the teacher has been retained two years; and in other districts, teachers have been employed again in the same school after an interval of one or more terms. The schools, in all these instances, have been good and profitable and some of them have been attended with marked success. There should be among our citizens a more familiar acquaintance with our school laws. These laws have been subject to more or less change for several years past. They are now such that they will not probably be greatly modified at present. As recently revised, they are in a convenient form. A copy of the school laws, an abstract of the decisions of the Supreme Court, and a complete set of forms, are inserted in the Seventh Annual Report of J. S. Adams, Secretary of the Board of Education. This Report is furnished for the use of the inhabitants of each school district, and they thus have the means to obtain all necessary information in regard to our common school affairs. The school law has many excellent provisions, and should have in all towns and districts a fair trial. It provides what books shall be used in the schools, and it has already produced a uniformity. In order that our schools may improve from year to year in usefulness and efficiency, all who have an interest in their welfare, and all have this, should, as good citizens, faithfully perform what is required.

JOSHUA BRITTON, Bradford.

---

I am happy to say that most of our schools in this town for the past year, have been very good, and nearly all have been taught by female teachers. Most of our teachers have been those who have felt the responsibility of their position, many of them having been teachers of somewhat extended experience. We have had some

very excellent teachers, owing to experience, combined with a natural tact for teaching, a qualification essential to the greatest success of a teacher. There evidently appears to be a growing disposition on the part of our citizens to employ *live* and *competent* teachers. It does not appear to be of the first consequence to know what is the compensation required, but whether the applicant is every way qualified to teach a successful school, and this result, I attribute to the awakening influences upon the minds of our people by the workings of the present school system, the essentials of which are, Teachers' Institutes, School Registers, and Annual Reports.

In the last of the winter term, a portion of each school in town, the best readers and spellers, assembled at one place for public exercises in those branches. Prizes were granted to the best readers. In spelling no prizes were granted. Though the day was unfavorable, the attendance was good, which gave evidence that the scholars and parents were interested. This plan was adopted that more attention and thoroughness might be given and required in these branches, and, in my judgment, much good was accomplished in that direction.

A number of our best teachers have been retained in the same district, a practice which is in the highest degree conducive to the best interests of such districts, and, if followed out to a greater extent, our schools would make better advancement than now.

You solicit views of Superintendents upon School Registers, Teachers' Institutes, and Annual Reports. In my judgment, all these are conducive to the best interests of our schools. The Registers are causing a more punctual attendance at school The Institutes serve to awaken an interest in the teacher as to the best methods of teaching different branches, and in governing schools, causing them to be more wide-awake and alive to their responsible duties as teachers. I pronounce them a great benefit to our teachers and schools. I consider that the Annual Reports are doing a most excellent service in awakening an interest in parents by the perusal of different reports. I wish every family could have a copy.

S. P. WILCOX, Brookfield.

---

There is a growing interest in the subject of common schools in this town, manifesting itself in a greater anxiety to secure the services of competent teachers, and in an increased number of visits to the schools by prudential committees, and others interested in their welfare. The visiting of schools I consider to be at once one of the most potent and feasible means of improving their condition, that could be devised.

Our schools, with two or three exceptions, have been quite successful during the past year. The lack of proper discipline has been the occasion of the little difficulty that has arisen. In fact, the neglect of discipline has been the occasion of more trouble in our schools since my acquaintance with them than all other causes combined. It requires no small amount of tact and talent to properly guide and direct the early development of Yankee enterprise, particularly when, as is often the case, parental authority has failed to do its part of the important work.

Our schools are much better classified than formerly. The elementary branches are more thoroughly and systematically taught, and a greater number of general exercises are introduced, which while they impart much useful information, also keep up a lively interest among the pupils. Unsteady attendance, the frequent change of teachers, the want of the proper means of illustration, continue to hinder the progress of our common schools towards that exalted position which the vital interests of our country demand they should speedily attain.

The subject of physical education is one which has not received the attention which its importance demands. Rousseau says, "If you wish to develop the mind of pupil, develop the power which mind has to govern; exercise his body; make him healthy and strong, that you may make him prudent and reasonable." If it be true then, that gymnastic exercises, while they give tone and vigor to the physical system, also serve to develop the mental faculties, and there is no lack of author-

ity to substantiate the statement, it seems eminently fit that they should find a place in the common school.

PERLEY CHANDLER, Chelsea.

---

There is a growing negligence on the part of teachers and district clerks in respect to filling out the Registers, which should be corrected, if necessary, by additional legislation. If the laws respecting Registers are suffered to be treated with little if any respect repeatedly by some districts, while they receive a full share of the public money, it will soon result in a total disregard of their requirements, thereby enhancing the labors of the Superintendent, by forcing him to seek other sources of information than those provided by law for the material requisite to a just compilation of his statistical returns. About half of our Registers are incorrectly filled out this year.

In two or three cases, teachers have failed in all their requirements save the daily record. If district clerks were required to file in the town clerk's office a certificate from the Superintendent, that the Registers of their respective districts were correctly filled out before any part of the public money could be assigned them, it would go far towards correcting the evil.

F. M. BAILEY, Fairlee.

---

Nearly all the schools in this town during the past year have been under the care of efficient, active, and successful teachers. Some of them might be termed model schools; young and inexperienced teachers would be much benefitted by visiting them; others acquiring a better knowledge of governing a school, and improved methods of imparting knowledge to the young. The School Register I consider of much importance as a book of accounts, and history of the school. Most all of the Registers have been correctly kept. The Teachers' Institutes are cheap, useful and powerful disseminators of knowledge; they are successful and active agents that are working out a great reform in our schools. Every teacher should attend them. The Annual Report, the history of the schools of our State, is replete with instructions, suggestions, laws, and forms. A valuable book, full of life, vigor and thought, it should be read by every family in the State.

There is not a dictionary, globe or thermometer in town that belongs to the schools. The four outline maps reported are small maps of the State of Vermont. I hope that the time will soon come when all the schools will be the owners of such school apparatus as is necessary for the explanation of all the different studies taught in school. Twenty-six scholars in town have no absences. Their names should be written in "pictures of gold."

A. B. ASHLEY, Orange.

---

It is doubtless true that our common school system is not only one of the surest guarantees of civil liberty, but also of christian civilization and human improvement. As scholars, patriots, statesmen and true philanthropists we can hardly do a greater service to society and the world than by fostering, elevating, and improving the character of our common schools. Would we enlarge our children's capacity for enjoyment, and open before them a bright prospect of honor and future usefulness, we should educate them, and educate them in the best possible way. Would we save society from the curse of vice and crime, and plant a debt of gratitude in the hearts of those who shall live after us, we should open and expand the minds of the rising generation, and so enlighten their understandings that they may know and eschew the evil and follow only that which is good. It is always better to pay for the education of the child than the ignorance of the man; and the wisest political economy would rather make people a law unto themselves than build jails, and houses of correction, and State prisons for the punishment of offenders. But much as our system of common school education has to do in preserving and bringing society up to a higher

standard of nobility and enjoyment, still people are very careless and indifferent in reference to its claims upon them. One of the greatest embarrassments under which the teacher labors, and one of the greatest obstacles to the improvement of our common schools, is the carelessness of parents and guardians. Too often they leave the school without visiting it at all; and if their captious children do not find fault, the decision goes forth that they have a good school, whereas, the very reverse may be true. People *must set their judgments to work*, must investigate the condition of their schools for themselves, or else expect to be imposed upon. They must investigate so that they may be able to approve and sustain the qualified, and reject the pretentious and unqualified. When people awake to the importance of this subject then shall we have better schools.

MARK POWERS, Strafford.

---

A vicious and defective education in children is the main cause of all vice and immorality. Said Horace Mann, "If we permit the vulture's eggs to be incubated and hatched, it will then be too late to take care of the lambs." Could the result of a defective education or of no education at all, be seen in children as quick as the sound of a blow can be heard after the stroke, what care and diligence would be exercised in their training; and yet the evil effects of such an education are just as sure to follow as the different seasons are to follow each other in turn. When the child's eyes first open to the light of wisdom; when his first actions are to strike the key note of his future history; when his unfledged mind is nestled and brooded, waiting till its pinions shall be plumed and nerved, then give to him that culture of intellect, that light and knowledge, and that omnipotence of virtue which it is the duty of education to diffuse. There is no way by which knowledge can be so widely diffused and made so generally advantageous as by means of our district schools. When we determine, then, as we must, that the education of children is the duty of government, and that the common school is the only practical way by which that duty can be performed, what labor is too arduous, or what amount of money too lavish to promote their interests? The great benefit of this system of schools is not fully appreciated by the masses. If it was it would be cherished with as much earnestness by parents as they have love for their children.

S. M. GLEASON, Thetford.

---

Good schools are the strong bulwarks of our country's prosperity. Still there are many who fail to appreciate the working of our present system of schools. In some respects it may be deficient. Thus are all the efforts of man, but it is the best we have, and we should profit by experience, get at and learn the best method, thus going on to perfection. The compensation of school officers is small, yet duties may be performed that are of the highest importance to our success in being an educated people. The working of the law in this town is very beneficial, and its results already draw forth the best efforts of the people to have their schools fully attended. This is one of the grand features of the law that children shall attend school. When this is fully observed we may begin to look for the great reform so much desired by the lovers of educational prosperity. I must say in the closing up of my official duties as superintendent of common schools in Topsham, that the schools, taken together, are fast improving, and that a higher order of culture is manifest, and that the town may feel proud of her district schools. What reason shall we assign for their rapid improvement? I will answer briefly. The people begin to feel the pride so inherent in intelligent communities that their efforts shall not lag as long as the State continues her present efforts. The people feel it incumbent upon them to acquiesce in the law, and thus the result.

L. H. TABOR, Topsham.

Our schools in town during the past year have generally made good improvement, and more especially in orthography, reading and arithmetic. Three fourths of all the teachers employed were of adult age and experienced in teaching. Those who are young and without experience in teaching I have found the least efficient. Out of thirty-one teachers employed, twenty-five are female teachers, and they have been fully as successful as the six male teachers in instructing and managing their schools, and I think them usually better qualified to instruct children under ten or twelve years of age. I am well satisfied that the progressive series of Readers, by Town & Holbrook, now generally used in our common schools, are better adapted to all grades of scholars than any that have preceded them.

The Registers are better kept by the teachers in town than formerly, yet there is room for improvement; but some of the district clerks' returns are miserable failures. This need not be and should not be so. I consider most, if not all, of the statistics obtained from them of great value when the Registers are so kept as to make them reliable.

Of the Teachers' Institutes, I hear but one voice from teachers and others who attend them, and that is, that they are valuable and *pay well*.

The Annual Reports of the Board of Education and of the Secretary are deemed important by all intelligent men that read them.

G. ROLFE, Tunbridge.

---

Our schools might be improved by the teachers adding a little energy with their knowledge. Again, the districts take too little interest in their schools, and especially prudential committees take but little or no interest in their schools, but five having visited their schools in the entire year.

I am of the opinion that the money paid to the Secretary, and Town Superintendents of common schools would do more good if appropriated for the use of schools in the State, or in publishing a paper devoted to educational purposes which would wake up an interest in the several school districts in the State.

Most committees hire the cheapest teachers they possibly can, and then find fault with Superintendents for not making the school what it ought to be, instead of seeking out and employing those known to be competent and experienced.

LYMAN SARGENT, Washington.

---

I consider school Registers an indispensable article in the school—a sort of lens through which the condition of the school for the past year may be seen. Some teachers have complained of being obliged to record the instances of tardiness twice each day, as it foots up too large an account at the close of the school term. Some schools in town have striven to emulate others in the least number of tardinesses and absences.

A method which I approve, has been adopted in some schools, of basing the deportment of the pupils on a roll which is called every night, and those whose deportment has been perfect or imperfect, is thus ascertained, and the result is marked in the deportment column at the close of the term; thus doing away with a prejudicial marking as has sometimes been made.

I think no one who has seen the practical benefit resulting from teachers' attendance upon the Institutes can fail to see their importance and be impressed with their utility. And I sincerely hope that the next holden in this County may be in this section, so that more of our teachers may avail themselves of its benefits.

Much good results from a public reading of the annual report, but far greater good would follow if they were printed, so that a copy could be put into the hands of every parent and guardian.

I am happy to say that a deeper interest has been felt by parents the past year for the welfare of our common schools, which has manifested itself in additional

visits upon them the past year. A steady advance in the condition of our schools is observable.

HIRAM S. DAVENPORT, Williamstown.

---

The schools in this town the past year, with few exceptions, have been very successful. Still there is a chance for much improvement. Our teachers are gradually forsaking the old method of adhering too strictly to the text books, and adopting in its stead the better system of oral instruction. One great hindrance to a thorough and efficient adoption of oral instructions is the utter destitution of suitable school apparatus. Wages being very high, farmers and mechanics well know, it is for their interests to obtain tools with which they can perform the greatest possible amount of labor in a given time. Why not then adopt the same method in our schools, and provide teachers with those aids which will best enable them to discharge the arduous labors of the school room.

The school Register is of great value in regulating our schools, and the information obtained therefrom of great importance. Most of the teachers the past year have aimed at correctness in their reports, which cannot be said of the district clerks. Their vague and indefinite answers, and many blanks, have occasioned me much trouble and perplexity in filling this report. The practice of boarding around in many districts has become obsolete — the majority of our teachers the past winter having been provided with permanent homes. One third of the districts in town the past year have shown their good sense in procuring thorough and competent teachers, and retaining the same during the year. Parents begin to perceive the absurdity of hiring as many different teachers as they have terms in a year. It requires, at least, one term for a teacher to become acquainted with the dispositions and abilities of his pupils. When he has accomplished this, and taught to good acceptance, why exchange him for another?

GEO. N. SANBORN, Albany.

---

The interest in the education of the youth is decidedly on the increase in this this town. Parents generally manifest a willingness to pay teachers a fair compensation. The school law is becoming better understood, and of course more fully appreciated than in former years. Most of our school houses are comfortable and convenient; there is abundant room in some instances, however, for improvement. We have been favored with excellent teachers in some of our schools, and the improvement of scholars has been creditable to themselves and their teachers; but the general character of our schools is below the standard of excellence desirable. There is deficiency, and will be, till public sentiment is so educated as to frown down all negligent or ignorant teachers. Our school law requires teachers to attend public examinations, yet they avoid them, and will, undoubtedly, till required by committees to be present, as a condition of their contract. As a general thing, teachers avoiding the public examinations are supposed to feel unqualified to bear a creditable examination in public. A little circumstance illustrating the difference between a good and poor school, in the estimate of a committee in a Vermont district, may be of use to others in making contracts with teachers. A teacher was engaged for fifty dollars if he kept a good school, and forty-eight any way.

D. H. AUSTIN, Brownington.

---

I have to report that I have acted as superintendent only a portion of the year, being obliged to resign my office before the commencement of the winter term. Of the summer schools I am pleased to say that they were more successful than any previous terms since my connection with them as Superintendent.

There was a greater attendance, far less tardiness and irregularity, more general interest on the part of parents, hence, as a matter of course, greater progress.

Several causes have tended to this result. The decrease in absences and tardinesses, and the improved deportment of pupils, is attributable in a great measure to the weekly report cards that were generally introduced and faithfully used by the teachers. These, from their novelty and adaptation to the reform proposed, at once excited the pupils and stimulated them to greater and better effort. From my knowledge of them and their effects I can but recommend the judicious use of such report cards with a proper selection from the great variety of certificate rewards and *et cetera* which the teacher may have access to, as a very efficient aid in correcting and removing those great evils of irregularity and inattention, which are so emphatically the chief hindrances to the true progress of our schools. Another and very perceptible cause of improvement is the gradually increasing interest manifested by parents. This interest shows itself in more frequent visits to the school room, *a very little* increase in the pay of their teachers, and a more cordial sympathy and co-operation with both teachers and pupils. One fact is ever apparent, that in those districts where the most interest is shown by parents, the best schools are found, and it is equally true, that where the most interest is manifested, our best teachers are found and have been faithfully at work. We are apt to dwell upon the apathy and carelessness of parents, and I am inclined to think, throw too much blame upon them. We must not expect that the parents will generally arouse themselves, but must be wrought upon by some outward and foreign influence to effect a thorough, permanent awakening. This, we are all aware, has been in part accomplished by lectures and the press, yet the great bulk of this work, if ever done, will be done by the constant, persevering *missionary* labor of our teachers. What we want, therefore, is a greater number of energetic, zealous, *living* teachers. I would not be guilty of a libel upon our noble class of teachers; yet I sincerely wish I could comprise them *all* in that class of active, faithful, *devoted* teachers. Experience has taught us that the most faithful are the most successful, and that where there is such labor, a corresponding interest is universally awakened. Such teachers soon come to be appreciated, and are retained several terms in the same district, and noble results for the cause of education are achieved.

I am happy to say we have several of this class in our own town who are ornaments to the profession, and noble benefactors to those districts where they are called to labor. For these we are truly thankful, and can only hope that many more such may arise among us, and thus our communities be enlightened and awakened, our children correctly taught and influenced, and thereby our schools be brought up to that height of power and usefulness they were designed to occupy.

DAVID M. CAMP 2d, Derby.

---

We have had good schools in all our districts with only two exceptions. This I attribute to the influence of the Teachers' Institute held in this county, to the general efficiency of the school law, and to the efforts of George W. Todd, Esq., who has been employed as a teacher in this town during the past five years, and who has done much in preparing his pupils to be successful teachers. The failure as to schools in two districts arose from different causes. In one, it was on account of the alarming prevalence of the diphtheria, of which disease seven children and youth died. In the other district, on account of an unwillingness on the part of the voters (which has existed for five years) to agree upon any plan either to locate or build a school house. I therefore beg leave to call your attention to the necessity of a law, according to which if a district neglect to provide a suitable school house for more than one year, it shall be the duty of the selectmen of the town where there shall be such neglect, to locate and build a school house, the expense to be met by a tax upon the grand list of said district. I think if there were such a law, the cases requiring its application would be very few: the *remedy* proposed would prevent the *disease*.

SIDNEY K. B. PERKINS, Clever.

Another thing connected with this is the punctuality of the scholars, and over seven hundred tardy marks to an average of 35 scholars for one term, is sufficient excuse for calling your attention to this item. It is only a few minutes, a half hour lost, but this is so much valuable time, some exercise is lost, and the scholar must work harder or get behind his class, and a few such times will discourage him, and he will lose all ambition. But this is not all; it affects the class and interrupts the order of the whole school, and interferes with its arrangements; and, more than this it will fix upon the child the habit of delay, and he will always be a half hour too late—too late to make a good scholar, too late to get into a good business, too late to make a good trade, in fact, too late to do anything worthy of himself. Then look to this matter, and see that your children are always punctual at school; and farther, if you wish to get all the advantage you can from your schools, don't ask your teachers to board around. However well they may be qualified, they can improve themselves every day, if they can have quiet for thought and study, and rest, and this they cannot have by going from place to place to board. It wears upon the health and energy of the teachers, and deprives them of all opportunity for improvement, and the district that furnishes a comfortable boarding-place for the teacher, makes a judicious investment and saves money in the end. You might as well ask your minister to board around, and expect him to give you a fine, carefully prepared sermon every Sunday. Now, if you will give this subject a careful consideration, you will be satisfied that good comfortable school houses, school apparatus, and good, thorough, well qualified teachers are a material saving in time and money to any district, even if your schools cost twice as much as now. Take a good thorough teacher, give her a good comfortable boarding place, and a comfortable school-house, and she will accomplish more, and do it far better at that, in one term, than many, I might say the majority, of your schools now do in two. If this is so, what are you gaining? One term's pay, board, wood and three months' time to your children; but suppose you pay your teacher double what you now do, then you save three months' board for your teacher, three months' wood, and three months' time to your children. Now these are facts which you should well consider.

One favorable indication I have seen among the people here: they came out in good numbers to attend the session of the Institute lately held here, and manifested much interest in it. These Institutes are doing much good for our schools; more for our teachers than you imagine. They give them new and better ideas about teaching, and a new and higher energy for their work.

Now, let us become thoroughly awake to the importance of making our common schools what they ought and can be. They are our main dependance, I might say our entire dependance for educating the mass of the people. The majority of our business men must and will receive their training here. So much as we elevate and improve the common schools, so much do we elevate and improve our society, and all the greatest and highest interests of the people.

Then, let us not so much *talk* as *work*. Let us place the common schools on such a footing that, hereafter, it may be the proud boast of our children, when occupying prominent and honorable positions all over the Union, "I received my education in the Common Schools of Vermont."

MILTON R. TYLER, Irasburgh.

---

It is gratifying to me to say that there has been a very visible change in our schools for the past year. Teachers were better qualified and manifested more interest for the welfare of those committed to their care. In return, the scholars in some of the schools showed, by the advancement that they had made, the fruits of thorough teaching and attentive study. It was apparent that those teachers who had availed themselves of the opportunity of attending the Teachers' Institute were better qualified to manage a school than those who had not. There was better discipline and more aptitude to communicate. I am much in favor of our school law, and

feel confident that we cannot have a better one. The working of the Teachers' Institutes is bound to give us teachers who will have a more exalted view of their calling. The organization of Teachers' Institutes in each County in the State, in addition to those held by the Secretary of the Board of Education, would be instrumental in doing much good. The School Register is, in my opinion, what it should be. I am proud to say that teachers have paid more attention to them than they have heretofore.

L. C. MOORE, Troy.

---

In the "School and Schoolmaster" there are six things specified as *causes* of the poor condition of schools. We of this town suffer much from at least three of these "causes," viz., 1st. Want of interest on the part of parents and others; 2d. Frequent change of teachers; 3d. Teachers not well qualified. The shades of two other difficulties there mentioned trouble us still, viz., our school districts are too small, so that two schools in a district are not practicable, and there are a few outlawed text books still hanging about some of our schools, making the number of classes in our schools too numerous. The want of interest on the part of parents shows itself in the miserable condition of the school houses. No class of buildings in town is nearly so poor for the use they are designed for, as the school houses. And when one fact is stated, viz., that the best house in town at the present time, is one that cost only $100 in its erection, and probably has not had $5 spent in repairs since, further comment on this subject is unnecessary. We can understand why parents are ashamed to attempt the expression of any interest otherwise in the education of their children, so long as they show such a disposition to expose their health, and abuse them in regard to a place to go to school. Frequent changes of teachers is an evil of great magnitude. A new teacher must spend days and weeks before he can understand the intellectual ability or the moral bearing of his different pupils. And the scholars are of necessity left, for the most part, to choose their own classes and studies. And it must be acknowledged that the pupil is generally the most unfit person there is to make these arrangements. But the only safe course for a new teacher to pursue, if he meddles with this matter at all, is to have every pupil "begin at the first of the book and go as far as he can." Under this process repeated every term, the advancement of the scholar in his studies is much like that of the toad getting out of the well; and with some pupils who are disposed to be "naturally tired," the process of education advances about as the toad did in the problem, as I have once heard it stated, where he got up *two* feet per day and fell back *three* every night.

Want of suitable qualifications in teachers is also a serious defect in many of our schools. The question arises, "why give a certificate?" But when a superintendent knows that no better teachers are likely to present themselves, and wages are so low that he cannot invite others who are qualified to teach the schools, there is only one alternative. Most of the teachers are hired, and not unfrequently they begin their schools before applying for a certificate. And whether it shall be better to break up the school, if the teacher is rather poorly qualified, and put in another who is but an infinitesimal better, and let him experiment, is a question for the Superintendent to decide as best he may. My memory is that at the two public examinations of this year there was present at one of them but one solitary individual of the patrons of the schools in this town; at the other, none. This gives the Superintendent little moral support in the discharge of his duty in a faithful manner. Nor does it incite him to be faithful and conscientious. How a man can force his way through these difficulties and secure efficient teachers at once, is a problem too hard for me. But we are determined to remedy these evils in time. We shall hope to show a better record in a few years.

A. A. SMITH, Westfield.

As a means of exhibiting to the public the state and condition of our common schools, the Register stands first and foremost in the rank of instrumentalities for the collection, spread and diffusion, of useful and statistical information. It embodies, if properly and faithfully returned, a statement or an exhibit of facts, of the highest importance to the people, spreading out before us as a State, through the medium of our Annual Report to the Legislature by the Secretary of the Board of Education, the onward and progressive tendencies of our public or primary schools.

The value of information is always in proportion to its reliability. Hence teachers and district clerks should be very careful in the discharge of their respective duties. Too much attention cannot be given to this subject. Too much care cannot be exercised in gathering the material for fitting up and completing the requirements of our Registers. They are the sources from which we glean the actual condition of popular education in the State. To them we look for information in regard to the practical operations of the school system. From them we learn and ascertain the feeling of the people in relation to the education of their children. Through them we are informed of the expense of our schools, of the interest felt for their improvement, and of the efforts made for their promotion. The interesting character of such intelligence should wipe out and remove every feeling of indifference or neglect on the the part of teachers and district officials. Although the services rendered are poorly paid, no adequate compensation being given by the authority that imposes the obligation, still the public benefits resulting from full and complete returns should prompt each and all to a faithful discharge of their duties, leaving the matter of reward and appreciation to a more generous and enlightened future, to a more wise and comprehensive legislation. The time will come when a day spent in gathering and collecting facts and items pertaining to one of the highest interests of the State, the education of its children, will be as readily paid and as suitably rewarded as any similar service rendered in any of its departments, either civil or political. Upon the principle that compensation increases in proportion to the magnitude and importance of the labor performed, the humble teacher, and the retired district clerk—the worthy instructors of our schools and the unassuming superintendents thereof—should be far more liberally and generously remunerated. A large percentage of our teachers feel the labor of fulfilling the requirements of the Register an unrequited toil. They look upon the demand as made by the Strte and consider it, as I think they have a right to do, a matter or a transaction outside and independent of their contract to teach. If the State calls for information, it should promptly pay for it. Otherwise much of statistical returns will be mere guess work, few taking the trouble to ensure accuracy in their records or statements. A teacher with a large school has some difficulty in keeping a correct account of every tardiness, every dismissal, or every corporeal punishment. A school of fifty or sixty scholars, and many of them much larger, entering the schoolroom from 8 o'clock in the morning till 10 o'clock in the forenoon, puzzles somewhat the best of our teachers to keep a reliable record of tardy attendance. On entering the school-room an instructor finds other and more pressing business than registering duties. The exercises of the school must commence and progress whether scholars come early or late. Consequently this part of the Register is very indifferently attended to, no additional pay being allowed them for the effort. The same remarks are applicable to dismissals. Scholars leave or pass from the school room without any note being taken of their departure. In crowded schools it is quite difficult to record every permission of this kind, as the more prominent classes and recitations are usually heard in the after part of the day.

Corporal punishments are in the same predicament. Few teachers report the actual number inflicted, and in many of our schools the chastisements, whether reported or omitted, should be largely increased.

Teachers' Institutes, so far as I have been able to judge, are all they claim to be, being one of the best means ever instituted for awakening the public mind to the worth and importance of our common schools. There has been much good done by them. They have called up questions, and elicited discussions, that have brought

home to the heads and hearts of the people a realizing sense of their responsibilities to the young and the rising generation. I wish these Institutes and their influence could be doubled throughout the State. Time and money spent in conducting and supporting them, are very wisely and judiciously employed, and few investments in our power to make, pay principal and interest better. May the efforts and exertions made in their behalf be signally blessed.

The annual reports of town Superintendents to their respective towns are documents of great public interest. They embrace a subject of the most vital consideration to us as a commonwealth, and contain views and statements, thoughts and suggestions entitled to a wider and more extensive circulation, than the mere delivery at a March meeting can give. All classes of the community are alike interested in our common schools. A report exhibiting their state and condition should be furnished to each and every patron, parent, and guardian, that it may be carefully read and pondered by all. A few voters who may choose to assemble in our Town Halls on the first Tuesday in March, are not the only persons interested in the prosperity and advancement of common school education, nor the only class in society whose influence and co-operation are valuable in the spread and diffusion of useful knowledge.

The State requires of each Superintendent an honest and faithful report touching the progress and improvement of the public schools under his charge and supervision. Yet it makes no provision for the people at large ever to see, hear, or read it. Is this the wisdom of the nineteenth century? Every report is public property. It is written for the public good, and should be published at public expense. If the State imposes a duty, it should turn the discharge of that duty to the wisest and best account. Instead of locking up a labored effort within the narrow limits of a Freemens' meeting, instead of leaving the publication of these valuable papers to the several towns, an act should be passed authorizing and requiring the publication of these reports throughout the State, giving them thereby as much weight, and as general a circulation as possible. The moral effect of such a statute would increase the influence of our annual reports a hundred fold. Superintendents would be more careful in their style and statement; a higher grade of talent and experience would be brought into requisition, and a new and more vigorous impulse given to the entire system of popular education.

R. M. PHILLIPS, Castleton.

---

The Register can no more be dispensed with in a good school system, than the account book in any well conducted business. The appearance of the Register is a revelation of the teacher's fitness or unfitness for his work.

The public (?) examinations were not well attended. Indeed they were scarcely redeemed from being *private*. This ought not so to be. It is difficult for the town Superintendent to raise the standard of qualification of teachers, unless the people will come and help him.

In my report to the town meeting, I said: "The people generally manifest too little interest in their schools. But is the character of our common schools a matter of little or no concern to you, fellow citizens? Have you no interest in the education of the children that you love? Is the character of the rising generation a matter of indifference to you? Do you not care whether the fathers and mothers of the next generation be ignorant, or educated? Do you not desire that they be better educated than yourselves? Let me earnestly advise you to read carefully the last school Report, which is to be found in the hands of every District Clerk. Especially would I call your attention to what is said about the expense of our schools; boarding *around*; attendance at school meetings; public examination of teachers, and attendance of scholars. Our schools are called *free* schools; and we boast of our system of free schools. But they are not free to all, they cannot be free to some families so long as a large part of the expense of supporting them is placed *upon the scholar*. The expense for wood and board is more than one-third of the expense of all the

schools ; in some cases nearly one half. I have been told that scholars have been out of school this winter in this town, because their parents could not afford to pay their proportion *on the scholar* for wood and board. Now this ought not so to be. The property of the town or the district, (with the State fund) ought to support the schools ; otherwise they are not *free* schools. The whole expense of sustaining them should be put upon the Grand List ; as it is and has been for years, in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. This ought to be done by a State law ; and it will doubtless be done sooner or later. But, meantime, each town or district ought to see to it that the schools are truly free for *all* children of school age, however poor the families to which they belong; the entire expense of supporting them, (including the wood and board), being assessed on the Grand List, and not any part of it *upon the scholar.*"

Let me take the liberty to inquire if it would not be better to hold the March Town Meeting later in the month,—say the second or third Tuesday instead of the *first*? Is there any serious objection to this? It would be better for schools, and Superintendents' Reports ; for all the schools are not closed March 1st.

WM. T. HERRICK, Clarendon.

---

Our schools are not what they ought to be ; in fact they are not what they might be ; but I am of the opinion that the fault is not so much the teachers' as their employers, and this is not more true in this town than throughout the State, manifesting itself in the form of old, dilapidated houses, no maps, or charts, or black boards fit for use, and entire want of interest on the part of parents and patrons of the schools.

What we need is a Teachers' Institute in every town, that the living, burning truths enforced with "*adjectives*" might convince the public mind of the great advantages to be obtained under our present school system. But the Annual Report is doing a great work in this direction, and should be circulated so that every family can read it.

H. J. PECK, Ira.

---

Every year's experience only convinces me more and more of the value of the Registers as a means of accurately measuring the prosperity and usefulness of the schools. Years before there was any legal requirement of this kind I requested the Teachers in the town where I was then superintendent, to keep similar records of attendance; and their practical workings, even then, convinced me of their real utility. They are unquestionably doing much for the schools in every direction, and the real friends of the schools are becoming more and more convinced of this fact. Those who have no interest in schools will of course grumble at everything that involves labor in their behalf, and if, as too frequently happens, they chance to be school officers, the work will be grudgingly and poorly performed ; but I have yet to find the first live teacher or supporter of the schools, who does not give them a hearty approval.

The Teachers' Institutes are invaluable, not so much for the amount of instruction they impart, as for the service they perform in awakening teachers to the grandeur and vastness of their calling, stimulating them to higher preparation for it, assuring them of the sympathy of many in all their varied trials, and girding them with new revolution for their work. This has unquestionably been their effect among us, and it repays a hundred fold the expense and labor which they involve.

The Annual Reports are fraught with a vast amount of information in regard to the workings of the whole system. If they could only be generally read, they would soon revalutionize the whole sentiment of the community in regard to schools. There is the great difficulty, the people at large do not read them.

One great evil pervades our whole system everywhere; the wrangle in every district every year, as to whether the school shall be supplied wholly on the grand list, or whether the wood and board shall be on the scholar. The section of

the law which follows this ought to be entitled, an act to originate and perpetuate neighborhood feuds. It is very effective for the end.

If I could command the time just now, I could furnish some statistics which would put in a clear light the glaring irregularity and injustice of this provision. When will our Legislators decide that a common school education, at the public expense, is the right of the whole people, and it is for the interest not less than the duty of the State to furnish it to all, "without money and without price."

T. H. ARCHIBALD, Mt. Holly.

---

I have never been so deeply impressed with the very great value of our school Registers, and the importance of *perfect thoroughness* in gathering and reporting the various particulars they contain in regard to our schools, as now. Here is *one* way in which many who never think of looking into the school room to see what is going on there, will yet learn something of the influences under which their children are growing up, while ostensibly receiving their education; and what are likely to be the results comparatively and really of the expenditure of time and money for the support of schools. The narrow-minded, penurious and snarling questioner, who, in apparent consciousness that his inquiries are unanswerable, asks, what is all this worth, may be told, everything. The good physician first learns, if possible, the disease, and then applies the remedy. We need not be afraid that by any efforts we are likely at present to put forth, to *know* the condition of our schools, or to *improve* them, we shall be obnoxious to the charge of folly contained in the fool's epitaph "I was well, wished to be better, took phyisic and died." The truth is that while a good advance has been made in the condition of our schools, in many of them at least, the people generally have but little idea how poor they are, even now, compared with what they should be; and apparently there is as little real *interest* in regard to them as *knowledge*.

I am entirely in favor of holding teachers and school officers to a faithful compliance with all the requisition of the law in regard to keeping, collecting and reporting the various particulars intended to be secured by the Registers.

Your questions 32—40, to be answered by the "average of different terms," will not of course show how many different individuals, or how large a part of the school attend to these branches. Scarcely one in our schools but that attend to reading and spelling at least, and some attend school only in the winter session and study some of the other branches named; so that averaging is often practically halving the number of those who attend to some of them. Perhaps the object sought, however, in the general result is about as well attained as it is; if teachers should be required to report to the Prudential Committee, perhaps the *names* of those attending to the different subjects of study, the number of *different individuals* could then be found by comparing the lists of the summer and winter schools, and thus through the Superintendent get at length to you.

We have made some progress during the past year. One school-house has been *nearly rebuilt*; the brick walls only left, and the inside remodelled and rebuilt. One other district is about commencing a similar work, and a third voted to raise $100 for repairs. These are the only three school-houses which, in my report to the town last year, I pronounced entirely *unfit* for use. Two districts complied with the offer of the Superintendent last year to help those who would raise money for outline maps, globes, &c.

A paragraph or two from my report to the town will express my mind upon some special topics of importance.

The greatest defect noticed extensively in our schools is want of good government, and one of the most discouraging things in reference to a school that is at best but poorly governed, is the fact, that the teacher does not know it. I never yet saw a school, composed of few or many scholars, young or old, backward or advanced in study, that did not need government. Other things being equal, that is the best school and most useful to the scholars in every respect, in which there is the best order—the most faithful attention to each one's own business, and to nothing else. In

some of our schools a report was made at the close of the day by each scholar in regard to their obedience to the rules, (including especially "no whispering during study hours") and the almost uniform answer "perfect," when the names were called, was a correct index to the evident fact that *study* and not *play* was the special business of the scholars.

Another serious defect in most of our schools is the want of punctuality. Too much importance can scarcely be attached to this point, and parents may be assured that their own personal attention to it is necessary; otherwise the teacher's Register will contain many marks of absence or tardiness, and thus the school be very materially injured and the money expended for it rendered comparatively useless.

With considerable effort I think some increased attention to the schools has been secured in the visits of parents and other citizens, as well as attendance upon the public examinations of the teachers, a matter, to my mind, of great importance. But upon this topic I will not enlarge.

AZARIAH HYDE, Pawlet.

---

Notwithstanding the public mind has been much agitated in consequence of the excitement of war, our schools the past year have maintained their usual prosperity. I think in some districts in town there is an increasing interest manifested; a greater effort is being made to secure teachers who are thoroughly qualified to instruct, and it has resulted in placing in our schools some earnest, working teachers, who have done the schools much good and themselves much credit. There seems to be less unwillingness to have the expense of board and fuel, &c, by a tax on the Grand List. Some districts pay that expense in this manner now, and they are the most prosperous schools in town. Some districts being slow to see or reluctant to admit this an improvement, still contest the question at their annual meetings. I think, however, they will yet all come to it, and approve of the plan as the wisest and best. I hope the Legislature will not wait for such districts to become educated to this improvement by year's experience of their neighbors, but put an end to the discussions of the itinerant manner of boarding teachers and the antiquated notion of furnishing wood by the scholar, by making it the law that such expense shall be paid by a tax on the Grand List. If such was the law I think (this being a loyal community) the people would readily accept it, and all our schools soon be in admirable working order.

C. W. BRIGHAM, Pittsfield.

---

Too much importance cannot be attached to a full, accurate and suggestive annual report from the town superintendent, at the town meeting. This part of the duty assigned by the law of the State has been heretofore sadly neglected, and it cannot be expected that a higher standard of public education will be demanded by the people unless they are from time to time informed of the progress of their schools and the legitimate results which flow from the practical working of our school system, and upon the annual reports of the Town Superintendents must the people depend for this information. How little do the people of this commonwealth know of the expense, the labors—the results of the education of the children who attend upon our schools. It is true the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education makes an exhibit of all that pertains to our educational interests, yet how few of the people of the State does it reach! although it is annually placed within the reading of every citizen but few ever read it, and the news prints of the State are as silent as the grave almost, in reference to the statistics and remarks which their readers ought to have laid before them, while they call attention to almost every other subject. We cannot expect the standard to be elevated to the position of other states, so long as this silence is observed in reference to the most important interest of the State. We learn from our local papers how much our sheep, horses and cattle are appreciated, but not a word about the workings of the Vermont educational system.

How important is it then that the Annual Reports of our school officers should present in a concise manner the expenses of education in the State and especially of their own immediate locality, that their labors, and those of the faithful teachers under their charge may be appreciated; and thereby arouse the people not only to sustain their schools and demand that constant progression and higher aims shall result from these primary institutions upon which relatively all others are based.

It is to be earnestly hoped that attention will be given to this matter in the future, and that not only a report be presented, but printed for the use of each citizen of the town for which it was prepared. When this shall have been done, one step at least, will have been taken towards arousing the people of Vermont to second the earnest and faithful labors of the efficient Secretary and the Board of Education, in placing the educational interests of our State upon a high and broad foundation, and she will take rank among her sister Commonwealths, in the cause of education.

HENRY CLARK, Poultney.

---

Having been chosen as Town Superintendent for the first time, a year since, my remarks are necessarily based upon an official experience of a twelvemonth.

The Registers for the past year have been more accurately and systematically, as well as more *neatly*, kept than ever before. Teachers and committees begin to realize the importance of attending to this portion of their duties, as is shown by the fact that while last year five districts failed to send in their returns before the appointed time, this year every one reported in season.

As to Teachers' Institutes, I think that their influence for good can scarcely be overrated, and in no respect is this more clearly shown than in the complete revolution they have effected in the minds of the people regarding them. Five or six years since it seemed to be the prevalent impression even among the friends of the schools and school law, that Teachers' Institutes were well enough in their place, and might perhaps, be profitably attended by school ma'ams, clergymen, and superannuated old ladies of the masculine gender, but that it was decidedly beneath the dignity of a full grown *man*, to take any part in their deliberations. So entirely has all this been changed, however, that at the last county Institute, one of the most prominent original opponents of the law not only lent us his presence and countenance, but even volunteered words of encouragement and good cheer.

I think that more than half the improvement in our schools can be traced to this one source; indeed, I consider the two days spent by a teacher in attendance upon an Institute are of far more value to a school, than the mere instruction of a fortnight. Formerly it was very difficult to induce many teachers to attend the sessions; lately more than thirty have been in attendance from a single town.

The great drawbacks of our schools seem to be irregularity of attendance and tardiness. This latter nuisance has been greatly abated in many districts, but in others it seems to be the rule, and promptness the exception. Taken as a whole, however, I think that the prospects of our common schools were never better. There is less indifference to the welfare of the schools, a greater disposition to deal liberally with the teachers, and an increased willingness to sustain them; in short, a rapidly deepening conviction that upon a liberal and well conducted system of *free schools* depends our hopes for the future.

D. G. MOORE, Rutland.

---

I think there has been a decided improvement in the schools in this town since the present school law came into operation. Our teachers are decidedly better qualified, and as a natural result our schools are much improved.

Our schools are now all supported on the Grand List, which is also a great improvement on the old way of supporting a portion of them on the scholar. In fact, we are raising more teachers by half than enough to supply our own schools. The

opposition to the school law in our town has entirely died away. I think there is no one in town who would like to have it repealed.

L. H. HODGMAN, Sherburne.

---

School Registers accurately kept, possess the highest possible value. Through them is gathered up much information of great importance from all parts of the State, not excepting the "remotest corners;" and they furnish the most reliable data in relation to the true condition of our schools, and are very suggestive of measures to be adopted and instrumentalities to be employed for the further improvement of the school system, and the advancement of our educational interests, so deeply involving our general welfare and all the vital interests of the State. Teachers should be required to keep Registers with the strictest accuracy, for it is as much a part of a teacher's duty as to thoroughly instruct the pupils under his or her care. The defects which in the commencement were almost unavoidably attached to them, it is believed are fast being remedied; and it may be hoped that the day is not far distant when they will exhibit that state of perfectness so desirable, and afford the advantages contemplated in their institution, and fully answer the end for which they were originally designed. Persevering effort on the part of teachers can alone secure this desirable object.

Teachers' Institutes are an efficient auxiliary in keeping in motion and bringing to its highest state of perfection and usefulness, the complicated machinery of our educational operations. The information which Teachers derive from them is of the greatest importance, and no teacher should be absent from them unless prevented by absolute necessity. To be appreciated by the fast friends of education, they need only to be known; and, could they be of longer continuance, and the teachers attending be favored with the privilege of practically exhibiting their tact in teaching, perhaps they would derive additional advantage. Though not having been favored with an Institute, yet the teachers in this town with commendable interest have, we think, generally availed themselves of their advantages when opportunity has been presented.

Annual Reports are also of great value. This is emphatically true of the last one. The able and interesting Reports of the Board of Education and the Secretary of that Board, the extracts from the reports of Town Superintendents; the abstracts of decisions of the Supreme Court of Vermont, together with the Forms of various documents necessary in the transaction of business connected with schools, constitutes a most interesting Report of permanent value, which should be in the hands of Town Superintendents, Prudential Committees and Teachers; and it would not be a useless appendage to any private library.

HUBBARD EASTMAN, Shrewsbury.

---

There are some favorable indications in the condition of our schools. One is we are employing more of our own teachers. Sixteen have been residents of Barre.—Four of our own young men taught the last winter—a much larger number than we have had for many years. This tendency should be encouraged. We believe there is greater pride and ambition being awakened among the scholars to have no absences and tardinesses set against their names. Our school houses are in better condition than formerly. Some of the higher branches are being introduced into the schools, thus retaining a better class of scholars. More of our teachers seem interested in Teachers' Associations and Institutes, and are deriving much benefit from them.

But with these favorable signs, there are others not so favorable. Most of our school-houses are without Books of Reference. The town or the State, we think, ought to appropriate money to put a large Dictionary into every teacher's desk, for the use of the school. Outline maps and a globe should be in every school-room.

Young, inexperienced and poorly qualified teachers, are still employed because they work cheap. Prudential committees do not generally attend the public exami-

nations or visit the schools. Could these evils be corrected an improved condition of our schools would soon result. Our school system should provide for a more general and thorough lecture system. Competent speakers, setting forth the claims of the common schools, should be sent into every town to arouse the people to the vital sense of their importance.

It has been with regret that we have seen the spirit of *fault-finding* so prevalent in our midst the past year. In at least nine districts there was more or less complaint. In too many instances scholars were taken out of school. Had this been the result of a deeper interest in the schools on the part of parents, of greater watchfulness over them, it would not be so unfavorable an indication. But our returns show that it is not. On the other hand, our examinations fail to convince us that they have been inferior to many previous terms. As a whole we think they have been superior to some we have formerly visited; and hence, we conclude that these prevalent complaints indicate an unhealthy condition of the public mind. Parents will find that the better way to make their schools prosper, is to stand by their teachers, encourage them by their sympathetic words, frequent visits to the school room, hearty co-operation in their efforts to secure punctuality and steady attendance, good order and studiousness. Many of our schools are too small, especially in the summer term. We have too many districts. Parents ought not to value a little extra labor in getting their children to school, if by this means they can give them better advantages. We have all to become willing to sacrifice more of our time, effort and money in their behalf, before our schools will be what they should be. That is a very penurious and despicable spirit, as well as one that is blind to self-interest, which looks upon every dollar paid out for the improvement of our schools as thrown away, and resists with miserly littleness all appropriations for their benefit. And yet it is just this spirit that is crippling our schools throughout the State. We are almost ashamed of our humanity when we think how much *stinginess* there is shown in our appropriations for them. They are the strength and glory of our country, and in them must we hope for its intelligence and virtue.

F. S. BLISS, Barre.

---

I think our people appreciate our school law as they become more fully acquainted with its operations. It set a little uncomfortable at first like a new boot, but is easy and comfortable now. The School Registers, and Annual Reports are *indispensable* parts of the great whole.

No teacher is worthy of being continued as such who will not cheerfully give all the information required in keeping the Register. A great amount of information is collected through them that could not be obtained in any other way. I cannot believe that the citizens of Vermont would be willing to dispense with Institutes. The small amount of money expended by the State for their support, has a very large dividend. I hail with interest and delight the Annual Report of our Secretary. It should be read by all. Those who receive them should not cage them up but take pains to circulate them that they may be read.

J. NEWTON PERRIN, Berlin.

---

There has been a constant and steady improvement in the schools of this town for the last few years. The schools for the last year have been better than any previous year since my acquaintance with them. The attendance has been a large per cent better. The number of tardy marks have been a large per cent less. Parents and Committees have visited the schools more during the past year than they have been accustomed to do. Teachers have been more earnest and interested in their work; and, upon the whole, there has been a decided improvement. The people are getting more in earnest about the education of their children and the general welfare of their schools. When but a few years ago, they would not permit the Superintendent to read his annual report in town meeting, it is now listened to with much interest; and although some are not willing to bear the expense of getting

the report printed, it is done at the expense of the Superintendent. I have been very anxious for the last year to see how much good Teachers' Institutes, meetings and discussions, and the Annual Report of the Secretary do towards the improvement of the condition of our schools, and the waking up of the people, and in this town the proof is overwhelming that we cannot get along without them, and need more.

I have found in some districts, and it is painful to me to have to report it, that the committees have not visited the schools during the entire year, and that there has not been a male visitor, except myself, in some schools for two years. These are the districts that try to avoid hearing the annual report of the Superintendent, and voted not to have the report printed, hoping thereby to avoid the disgraceful record that necessarily stands against them. These are the districts that have not read the Annual Report of the Secretary, and that have never attended teachers' meetings and Institutes. Thus we have positive proof that there is not anything that will so awaken the people to their duty as Teachers' Institutes, and meetings and Annual Reports.

The School Register is another great help and blessing to our schools. As has been said, "God bless the men who invented it." It helps greatly to secure punctuality in attendance of scholars. It will lessen the instances of tardiness, and dismissals before the close of school; it will elevate the standard of deportment and recitations, and it will enforce upon the school the remarks of visitors. Although not properly kept by some teachers, we cannot dispense with it.

The condition of our school-houses has been improving from year to year. One new one was built last summer. We have now only a few poor houses, and these are poor enough.

The districts have not furnished any apparatus for their schools. There is not a set of outline maps, or any books of reference, clocks or thermometers in any school, and only one globe. Our teachers the last year have been mostly female teachers, and they have succeeded better than the male teachers. Can any one give a satisfactory answer, why females must teach for one-third of the pay of a male teacher?

I know that teachers and the friends of education, and the supporters of the present school law have many things to be discouraged about; yet we have many things to be thankful for, and we have but to press on and persevere and we shall yet be victorious, and become conquerors in the great cause in which we are enlisted.

J. P. LAMSON, Cabot.

---

The public schools of this town, as well as of the whole State, certainly have a strong hold upon the public mind, else how does it happen that they go on improving, slowly, perhaps, yet certainly improving, while almost every other interest is declining. That a majority of the people take the right kind of interest in common schools I do not believe, but the minority who do, understand that there is work to be done, and they do it with a will that defies all opposition. There have been no very important changes in the school affairs of this town during the past year. New school-houses have been talked of, and some will soon be built. Many ought to be, for some of the old ones are a disgrace to the town, and besides, every year we use them we waste our money, for no teacher can keep a first class school in a little, narrow, poorly ventilated school-room.

The teachers, as a general proposition, have done well, considering what they have had to do it with. Globes, maps, books of reference, &c., are not plenty in our schools; but the agitation of the subject of furnishing such things is beginning to have effect, and, if kept up, will soon produce good fruit in the shape of dictionaries, &c.

The Registers on the part of the teachers have been quite well attended to, but the district clerks have not all done their duty. I am not certain but there ought to be a series of Institutes for the especial benefit of district clerks. If they

would derive *half* the benefit from them that teachers have from a single course, the State could well afford to pay the bills for much every way would be gained.

Some method ought to be adapted to have teachers examined before they are engaged. Until such is the case, teachers examinations, whether public or private. will fail to accomplish fully the object for which they are required, viz : that none but competent teachers shall be employed.

There are some old customs that the people seem to hang to, as if life, health and happiness depended upon their preservation. The teachers must board round because if they do not the parents will have no opportunity to get acquainted with them. They cannot go and visit the school and there get acquainted with the teacher, because they would not know how to behave. This reasoning has had control here, and teachers, with one exception, have boarded around. I am happy to state, however, that the friends to a system of supporting schools wholly upon the Grand List are increasing. The evil effects of raising the board and fuel upon the scholar have been quite obvious to every observer during the past year. A large number of widows have been left among us with many children, and little means to provide for them. Every one would say at once, such children ought to attend school. Can they where the board and fuel is upon the scholar? The experience of the past year has taught me that they *do not*, and I believe they *cannot*. Poor people in times like these, and especially widows whose husbands have died in their country's service, have all they can do to feed and clothe their families. To board a teacher three or four weeks is a burden which they are unable to bear, consequently they do not send their children to school. The State should act in this matter and remove this burden from the shoulders of the poor, and place it upon the property where it belongs. Such is the theory of our institutions, and every well-wisher of our schools, I believe, desires to see that theory put in practice.

LEE H. BLISS, Calais.

---

Much care has been exercised to arrive at positive facts in answering the foregoing interrogatories, for in some cases the clerks of the several districts have failed to comply with the law in keeping their Registers. The teachers have done quite well in this respect. I think the standard of our common schools has improved somewhat within the last few years. Still there are many things needed yet to make them efficient and that we may derive the greatest benefit from them. One thing is good order. Some of our schools the past winter have been sadly deficient in that respect. Another great need is better school-houses with better locations. There is also much lack of interest on the part of parents. Not one in ten ever thinks of looking inside of a school room. I cannot find in the Registers the names of more than a dozen or fifteen of the parents who have visited the schools in this town during the past year. And in many instances the Prudential Committee has failed to visit the schools. There are many more things which have a tendency to retard rather than accelerate the prosperity of our schools, such as small districts, and cheap and inefficient teachers. One thing is certain, never can our common schools arrive at that degree of efficiency which is so desirable until the foregoing evils are, in a measure at least, remedied. But how shall this be done?

It seems to me our Teachers' Institutes and other educational meetings are doing and will do much to accomplish this, and, in my opinion, they would do much more could the attendance of more of the parents be secured.

C. E. TEMPLETON, East Montpelier.

---

While there is a large portion of the people of this town, perhaps a majority, who are opposed to the present school system, still there is a working few whose determination and efforts to raise the standard of our public schools, are very commendable ; and we may say, a good work is being done. A *few* districts seem *determined* to come up to the point and turn out *scholars* in due time. This we anticipate will

have its desired effect upon *other* districts, so that a general awakening upon the subject of education may seem to be in prospect.

It is noticeable that the more successful teachers are those who have attended the Teachers' Institutes. It may be said of all *good* teachers that they have *learned* to teach. We need better teachers. The true methods of teaching the various branches to be learned in schools, should be known, that there may be more *uniformity* in teaching them. The Institutes, such as have been held in Vermont, are valuable to this end.

As to changing teachers every term of school, our districts are now of one mind, that the first good teacher they get, they mean to keep, even though it costs much money.

ELI S. PITKIN, Marshfield.

---

I have had fifteen years' experience in school teaching, and have held the office of Superintendent of schools both in New York and Vermont. I have taught under the old system without Registers, and consequently can appreciate their virtue more than a person of no experience. I was always in favor of keeping a record of our schools, of number of terms, length of terms, daily attendance of each scholar, expense of schooling, deportment, &c. Our Registers are just the thing for all this, and every year's experience adds more and more to their value. If our Registers are carefully lived up to, we shall not fail to see the interest manifested in every locality in the training of the immortal mind.

I have done everything in my power to have the Registers kept in every point, and, as far as the teacher's duty is concerned, it has been done to the letter. Some of the districts have failed in some few points, but I have been careful to have these corrected, so my report is reliable.

Our Teachers' Institutes are a glorious thing, and are exerting a powerful influence upon the teachers and others attending them. One thing I regret, and that is, that we cannot have them in every town of the State, and every one attend them.—I have been favored with the privilege of attending only two in this State, and I was very much interested in them. I thought that every teacher of experience must listen with interest to the instruction given. They must feel the truth of it. What can be of more importance than the education of our children of the class that sooner or later must come upon the stage of action? Yes, and whose education must certainly tell upon the future destiny of our nation.

Our school system is working well. It is gaining slowly but surely the favor of the community. All we want now is to hold right on and every one do his duty in regard to Registers, to Institutes, to the selection of proper teachers, superintendents, &c. Parents want to take a little more pains to visit schools, and a little more interest in the education of their children, and the work is done.

Until parents manifest an interest in school matters and take pains to have proper school-houses, black-boards, globes, outline maps, suitable books, &c., we need not look for that benign influence that we should have with their co-operation.

With all this we want they should visit schools more, and see for themselves what advancement their children are making.

In all my visits to schools I have been favored with only two to accompany me, and in some of the schools my name stands alone on the Register. We have only four comfortable school-houses in town; those are very good; the others are old fashioned and very much out of repair. We have no globes, outline maps, or school apparatus of any kind except the black-board and chalk.

DANIEL C. HOLT, Moretown.

---

We have paid higher wages to teachers the past year than formerly, and it is acknowledged by all that we have had better schools.

Some of our teachers have attended the Institutes and have been benefitted thereby, and I will here say, in conclusion, that it is my opinion that we do not have

as many Institutes as we ought ; we need something to wake the people up to a sense of their duty, and I think if we could have lectures from educational men in every town once or twice a year, we should soon be ready to receive the advice given us in your report and profit by it.

I think the school Registers are doing what they were designed to do—working a reform in our school system. I like the Annual Report ; it is what we need. It gives us the school law, also the opinions of some of the best men in the State in regard to the best modes of educating our children. It has an influence for good.

STEDMAN TUCKER, Warren.

---

Many of our schools during the past year, have been decidedly successful. The teachers have been good scholars, with much experience and skill in their work and a decided love for it. This love they have infused into their scholars, and the work has been thoroughly, joyfully, successfully done. A few, for one cause or another, have been well nigh if not altogether, total failures—neither teachers nor scholars, apparently knowing or caring very much as to what was done.

The one great mischief of our schools, the thing which, as it seems to me, most seriously affects their character and impairs the work they might do, is *irregularity of attendance on the part of the scholars.* The Registers are sadly marred with marks indicating the tardiness or absence of scholars. In our 19 schools with an aggregate attendance of 578, and an average attendance of 323, there are recorded 5006 tardinesses, and 557 dismissals. The number of absences for a half or whole day which is not required in the returns, is not unfrequently as large as that of the tardinesses and dismissals combined. No school can prosper where such is the order of things. The irregular scholar learns little or nothing and he impairs the success of every other scholar with whom he is in any wise connected. The parent or guardian who is the occasion of this, or who consents to it, commits a crime against the scholar, the teacher and the whole school. If any legislative remedy for this offence can be found, I sincerely wish it might be applied.

C. C. PARKER, Waterbury.

---

One of the chief and perhaps the most common evil connected with our schools is, that Prudential Committees too often hire teachers whose *price* suits them whether they have other or more important qualifications or not. According to the present school law it is discretionary with the Superintendent whether he will examine teachers or not, at any other time than that set for public examination, and I think it would be better for the schools and teachers if that discretion should be exercised.

If Prudential Committees of the several districts in town would agree with the Superintendent upon two days for public examination sufficiently early for all practical purposes, and would attend *themselves*, in company with such other citizens as are so disposed, and *not engage any* teacher till *after* such examination, I think the result would be that most districts would obtain competent teachers. Committees would be less likely to be imposed upon by those who are not qualified or perhaps, by those whom God *never designed* for teachers. But I will submit the proposition without argument; let the time be fixed for the committees to attend, and all who are intending to apply for situations as teachers present themselves and the thing will demonstrate itself, and the thing can do no harm and may be productive of much good.

There seems to be a prevailing idea in some districts that as there are but few scholars to attend school and those perhaps backward, that almost any person will answer to teach their school. A more fatal mistake could not be made. The more backward the scholar, the better should be the teacher. Good scholars can, and generally will, improve with but little instruction, while others often exhaust the skill and patience of the best teachers, and call into exercise all their tact and ingenuity before they acquire any considerable education.

SIDNEY O. WELLS, Woodbury.

The schools in this town the past year, with one exception, have been very good. In most of the schools the Registers appear to have great influence for good in regard to order and also tardiness. There has been one very good new school house built the past year, and one thoroughly repaired. The old ones are fast disappearing, and we hope that ere long the last dilapidated hut will have disappeared from view. When the whole expenses of the schools are defrayed by tax on the Grand List, by law, then shall we have a good addition to the school law. But three districts voted the board on the scholar last year, and one of those supports the school wholly upon the Grand List this year.

C. C. ABBOTT, Worcester.

---

Our School Registers were returned to the Town Clerks' office in due time, and with some exceptions, they had been kept with a good degree of care and accuracy. I have urged upon teachers, the importance of fidelity in performing this part of their duty, as I regard the information thus to be gained in relation to the working of our school system, of the first importance when it can be relied upon. "Facts are stubborn things;" there is no argument that bears with more weight upon the popular mind than the *statistical* showing of the actual condition of our schools. If the people know the *facts* they will be more likely to observe the deficiencies and to provide for them. Town Superintendents should insist, therefore, upon more care on the part of teachers and district clerks in keeping the School Registers.

All the better class of our teachers have been punctual in their attendance at the Institutes held in the County, and have manifested much interest and evidently derived much benefit from them. But the poorer class who most need the instruction and inspiring influence of those professional gatherings, were not in attendance, and probably for no better reason than want of interest. This same cause prevents them from giving any attention to the theory and practice of teaching. Many seem to care for nothing except their reputation and their pay, and often they really deserve neither. Yet it might not be expedient to reject all such teachers, under existing circumstances. How is the evil to be remedied? I answer, by the working of the agencies we have already employed and, as soon as may be, by the creation of new agencies. The public must be roused and enlightened. The public meeting, the Institute, and the press must be chiefly relied upon to accomplish this work. The standard of Teacher's qualifications must be elevated. To this end, Teachers' Institutes must be multiplied, normal schools established, and a high toned and earnest school literature diffused throughout the community. It is evident that much hard work is yet to be performed and much patience exercised before so desirable an object can be gained. Yet Vermont will one day realize all we ask for her and the educators of the present must share the toil and responsibility.

The able Annual Reports of the Secretary of our Board of Education have acted an important part in the work of school reform. They are filled with important information and suggestions upon all practical questions, and have not only affected the past and present, but will remain in the future, a standard history of the progress of education in Vermont. But there is one difficulty touching the usefulness of our Annual Reports; they do not reach the mass of the people. In what way can this information be diffused throughout the community? This is a practical question of much importance. I am unable to answer the question, but will suggest that it would be a good investment, a profitable expenditure if the State would pay the secular and religious press each year for republishing the whole Report.

Our school houses are in the way of improvement, as two of the poorest in town, were consumed by fire during the last winter and the districts are compelled to build new ones. There are a few more that *would burn*, if the fire should be applied. The schools the past year, have been taught by *females*, except the High School and *one* district school during the winter. This one school taught by a young man, with twice the compensation paid females, was among the *poorest* in town. Females must be educated and employed to teach our schools. The sooner we settle down upon

this conviction the better it will be for our State. Our High School and the grades below, have been admirably managed and taught during the past year.

HIRAM ORCUTT, Brattleboro.

---

I deem it not improper to say that the honor and security of every people, and the happiness of the masses unborn who are to come forward to fill our places, depend upon the little school-house by the way side. If the little district school is looked after and properly sustained, it proves a bulwark of the utmost security against every religious and political evil. Hence it ought to be the momentous inquiry of every reflecting mind, what is the true condition of our schools? What evidences are to be seen that we may be assured of their prosperity—of their marked proficiency? Are our expectations ever met? Have we done all that we ought to have done as parents and guardians, and left nothing undone? These questions should be answered by every one. We are happy to say there has been an increased interest manifested on the part of parents the past year. They are visiting the schools more. It encourages the teachers and scholars respectively to put forth greater mental and moral effort for their own good. It encourages a laudable pride. It gives also the parents and teachers a better acquaintance with each other. It brings them into sympathy. The parents then know for themselves how the school is progressing, deriving their knowledge from personal observation rather than hearsay, which is too often the bane of the best interests of the school. Our school Registers through the districts have been well kept during the past year. Teachers and others have attended the Institutes when within our reach.

O. C. MERRIFIELD, Brookline.

---

Our present school system is becoming more popular, and its beneficial effects on our schools better appreciated than during the first years after its adoption.

But if the whole expense of the school, including board and fuel, should be raised by a tax on the Grand List, I think it would be a desirable improvement. The School Register I consider an important auxiliary in the improvement of our schools. Very few would like now to dispense with them who at first thought them of little if any use. Teachers are more accurate in keeping them and their answers to the interrogatories are generally accurate. But on the part of district clerks there is such ignorance or carelessness that it makes it very difficult for the Superintendent to make a correct report.

The course that some districts pursue makes it a difficult matter for the clerk to answer all the questions required of them in the Registers. These districts use the public money received in April to pay for the last year's schools instead of having it in the treasury as a fund to draw from for the expenses of the present year; consequently no tax is made out in the district for the winter term until after the receipt of the public money, and after the clerk is required to answer the questions in the Register. It seems to me that some suggestions might be made in the Annual Report that would have a tendency to induce districts to alter their course in this respect.

The want of proper qualifications in our teachers and good goverment in the school are the greatest drawbacks to success in our schools.

The Teachers' Institutes I consider very efficient means to improve teachers in these respects; for as far as my acquaintance extends, those teachers who have attended them have been imbued with greater enthusiasm in their business as well as a desire to improve themselves and their schools. And I have yet to see the citizen who has attended an Institute who was not favorably impressed with its management and operation.

LABAN JONES, Jr., Dover.

The return of the time for an Annual report reminds us of the rapidity with which our years are going their rounds. Those who are lending their services in the cause of education may well say, "let us work while the day lasts." The times in which we are living are teaching us, as we have never been taught before, the value of our common school system, and the importance of doing all in our power to reap the full advantage from it, which it is capable of yielding. The friends of education may well be cheerful and liberal in furnishing the means of support to our schools.—If our school system were broken up, we should suffer irreparable loss. What could be substituted in its place? It is indispensable to a free government. How beautifully it harmonizes with the whole idea of a free republic! If government is to be in the hands of the people, they must be educated. They must be sound in morals and sound in learning. Our children must be introduced early to the elements of a good education. We must keep our attention upon our schools as a matter of the very highest importance. It is right and proper that every man should be taxed for the support of the common schools in the same manner that he is taxed for the support of government. Our schools should be supported at the public expense because they are indispensable to the public good. Our schools are sustained at a considerable cost. But what of that? It is an outlay which is rich in returns. If we call it a burden, it is a burden from which we cannot afford to be freed. Our national thrift would soon cease, and we should sink to barbarism. It is of more consequence than can be expressed in words, that we have good schools. For this we need good houses, good teachers, punctual, faithful scholars, and interested parents. And which of these requisites can we not have? Some of our houses are bad, *very* bad, such as belong to an age long past.

Some of our teachers have not been successful. Prudential Committees should be careful to consider what qualifications are required of a teacher in the school for which they are acting. Parents may easily do much to increase the usefulness of the schools. They may do harm or they may do good. It is the duty of parents to have an oversight of the branches of study to which their children attend. Let it be seen that they duly divide their time between all the branches of common school study.—If a daughter "does not like arithmetic" don't suffer her to neglect it on that account. If there is a son that "can't see what good it will do to study grammar," make him study it till he does see. By all means let every child devote a proper portion of time to each branch of study. Nor need they be confined to what has usually been considered as coming within the common school course. Why may not the standard of our common schools be raised? Why shall we over-look or forget our own schools and send abroad when we might have a school quite as good at our own door.

The influence of visiting by Prudential Committees, parents, and other friends of education, cannot be otherwise than good. It is very natural that those who do well, should wish to have others know it. Human nature is the same in a child at school and a general at the head of an army. The well-doing of a child should be noticed and commended on the same principle that Congress passes a vote of thanks to a successful general. A faithful teacher should not retire from the scene of his labors with the depressing thought in his mind, that he has borne his burden entirely alone, that no one has understood its weight or touched it with one of his fingers.

Permanence in teaching is of great consequence. The continuance of the same teacher in the same school, the benefits of retaining the same teacher for a series of terms, can hardly be over-estimated. In many cases, changes are made without any reference to the good of the school, but just to suit the fancy of the one who happens to be committee man. Let the best interests of the school be the leading object of every one who has any duty to perform in any relation, and those interests will be secured.

B. F. FOSTER, Dummerston.

We think much might be done to elevate the standard of our schools, if a greater effort should be made to secure the services of persons to teach, who are competent, and who have had experience, and are known to love their vocation, and feel the importance of being faithful in their work every day. This is not generally done, so that it sometimes happens in spite of our vigilance, that these weighty responsibilities are committed into too feeble hands.

I am resolved to discharge the duties of Superintendent, which the town has seen fit to commit to my care for another year, with a more strict reference to fitness and ability manifested by those who propose to teach. But before our schools can attain to that degree of usefulness they are capable of, there must be aroused in the minds of the people of this community a more rational view of the responsibilities resting upon them. Parents must be induced to feel that the school-room discloses with a faithfulness that seldom errs, the domestic influences of every home. I never expect teachers to succeed well in spite of parental influence: this would be a contradiction of natural laws and of the nature of things. Parents in this town sadly neglect their schools. They seldom visit them, and seem to think that the teacher is alone responsible for the success which attends his labors.

The school law is becoming more acceptable as its provisions are better understood. I think it is a very wise and judicious substitution in place of our former loose and inefficient system. I hope we shall be educated so that all in any way interested in our schools, may wish to have the spirit of the law honored.

This town has never seen fit to publish the annual report of the Superintendent of schools. The fact, that it was even talked about in the town meeting is, to me, a hopeful sign, that the appreciative energies of this people, in regard to the educational reform needed here, shall not always slumber.

SAMUEL PHELPS, Grafton.

---

We have no marked improvement in our schools to mention, neither are we obliged to say that the war matters which agitate our country and are laying their hands heavily on the resources of our State, through the medium of taxation, and might reasonably be expected to damage all enterprises depending entirely upon direct taxation, have had a detrimental effect on our schools. Some of our districts are improving steadily in an interest in their schools, being, I think, fully up with the times in book improvements, and seem convinced that the mainspring of a good school is a good teacher, and a good teacher commands liberal compensation. We think when a town or district is convinced that these few leading principles are facts in school management, good schools will invariably result.

J. H. RICHMOND, Guilford.

---

I am confident that there is a growing interest in schools in town, especially among the parents. And I think, in order to effect much in school reform the parents must be interested. Get them enlisted in the work and they will see that their scholars are provided with school-houses and good teachers, and the teachers do their duty. In some districts they have had public examinations near the close of the term, and they have been very well attended by the parents of the scholars. Reviewing the studies of the term, and closing with a public examination cannot, I think, be too highly recommended. It awakens a spirit of ambition and emulation in the scholars, and interests and calls out their parents, more than can be done in any other way. But this increasing interest is most plainly seen in the fact that the work of improvement in school-houses is going forward. One old "fossil" has been removed during the past year, and a new, finely built, convenient house has taken its place. Some repairs have been made on other school-houses. The tide of public sentiment is setting in the right direction, and I hope it will not be long before this town, which is notorious for its poor school-houses, will have as good ones as its neighbors.

E. L. WATERMAN, Jamaica.

I have but little to say with regard to the condition of schools in the town of Marlboro. There is not the interest felt for the promotion of schools that there ought to be, but yet I think the school law is gaining favor. I think we have secured the services of a better class of teachers for the past year than for any previous year since my acquaintance with the schools. The teachers have been faithful in the performance of their duty, with the exception of two or three who failed somewhat for lack of decision.

O. H. COPELAND, Marlboro.

---

You solicit remarks, but I have but very few to make. The condition of our schools, I think is slowly improving. But what we need most, is more interest on the part of parents, and especially prudential committees. By reference to our Registers I see but one solitary visit of any of the committees to the schools. I consider the School Registers very valuable, and wish that they were more faithfully kept.

As regards Teachers' Institutes, I consider them as a mighty agency to awaken the public to a greater interest in our system of schools, and wish that they could be more generally attended, not only by teachers, but by the public in general. Finally we need better teachers and a better appreciation of the vulue of their services.

R. M. PRATT, Newfane.

---

The summer schools were far below the standard of our schools for the past year or two. This was the result of our committees hiring cheap and inexperienced teachers as a general thing.

I have always felt that there was a great lack of interest in our schools, particularly by the patrons. I, therefore, for the purpose of interesting them, tried during the winter the experiment of a public examination of all the schools in town at one time and place, and, in accordance with previous notice, on the 16th of February, all of the schools in town except two, and all of the teachers but one (one teacher not being able to induce any of his scholars to be present) assembled at the Congregational Church at 9 o'clock A. M. When everything was in readiness all that were able to read in the Progressive Fourth Reader then read a short paragraph, after which we proceeded to the other classes. For example, we will take the classes in Greenleaf's Common School Arithmetic. They were all seated side by side, each school by itself. Each teacher was then allowed a certain number of minutes in which to hear his or her class. When they were all through, an opportunity was given for any person present to ask any school or scholar any question upon any thing connected with the subject that they had been over during the term. Thus, one school could be compared with an other,—1st, with regard to thoroughness and ability; 2d. The different mode of explaining the same principles, &c., &c.

A portion of the time was devoted to declamation and recitations. Two of the female teachers prepared a paper, the tone of which was intended to arouse the parents to a better sense of their relation to our schools. The exercises were closed with an address by L. F. Ward, Esq., of Westminster, late of Bernardston, Mass., to the parents, in which he urged them to take more interest in their schools, and pointed out the qualities they should look for in procuring a teacher. Thus what was put forth with fear as a feeble experiment proved most successful, and will, we think, become a part of our schools.

In my report to the town I recommended our appropriation of $15, to be divided into prizes,—one of $5, to be given to the best reader in town; one of $10 to be given to the class that should the best explain the principles of arithmetic—these prizes to be awarded at a public examination to be held on some day during the last week, of the majority of the winter schools, the award to be made by a committee appointed by the superintendent. This plan will, I think, be adopted.

H. D. HOLTON, Putney.

We find it extremely difficult to awaken and keep up an interest in our schools. The people generally seem bent on giving them just as little attention as possible. Many of our schools are dying for want of living material. The number of scholars is yearly diminishing, and we greatly fear that many of our out-districts will soon suspend all operations for want of scholars.

The Superintendent needs to *labor* very faithfully to keep the thing moving. The Prudential Committee very generally fail in their duties. Incompetent teachers are extensively employed, and, unless the Superintendent stands up firmly they are legally installed in the schools. The custom, so prevalent, of engaging residents of the districts as teachers we consider an evil. The feeling seems quite general, that our family must have the money, and then another, and "so keep it all in the family." Quite too often teachers are hired from partisan or sectarian feeling, whereas, the chief inquiry should be, is the person suitably fitted, in all respects, for the place sought for her?

We believe that the numerous cases of tardiness and absence are largely due to the negligence of parents, and a very great lack of discipline at home is one of the greatest evils which we have to encounter.

It is believed that the order in our schools is very much below what it ought to be. The tendency seems to be towards the *loose rein*. The discipline of Vermont schools so far as my knowledge goes, is no where equal to that required in Massachusetts schools. This is a point which should receive the earnest attention of those who have the matter in charge. We deem the cause of common schools one of our most vital concerns, and we pledge it our hearty support.

C. L. CUSHMAN, Townshend.

---

Our schools, with one or two exceptions, have been very interesting and profitable the past year. There seems to be an increasing interest manifested in our schools on the part of the parents in visiting and looking after them; and, on the part of Prudential Committees in a judicious selection of teachers. And when we have failed of having a good school it has been owing mainly to the oversight of the Committee in providing a teacher in poor health or with insufficient pay. A fair teacher well paid, proves more profitable in our schools than a good teacher poorly paid.

W. L. SEVERANCE, Vernon.

---

I think public examinations are growing in favor in this town. Several of our teachers have borne very creditable examinations. It would be far from true to say that *all* the teachers I have licensed were *well* acquainted with the several elementary branches. I cannot refrain from remarking that I am sure that the prosperity of the common schools of Vermont requires a compliance with the *spirit* of the law concerning public examinations which is not often yielded to it. Two of the teachers licensed by me had taught in the aggregate not less than twelve terms, but neither of them, as they told me, had ever been publicly examined. I suggest, Mr. Secretary, that by your questions you should solicit statements of the number of teachers examined publicly in the several towns. As you invite suggestions, it is not invidious to say that there may be several temptations to examiners, as to the examined, to encourage private examinations more than public. The presence of parents at well conducted examinations must quicken their own intelligent interest in schools, stimulate Superintendents to fidelity, and encourage even the more modest and shrinking of well prepared teachers.

Teachers' Institutes ought to be encouraged. Tax payers would be wise to encourage teachers to attend them, and often themselves to attend them.

C. BROOKS, Wardsboro.

---

Most of the schools in the town the last year have been good. They have all been taught by females with one exception. The scholars have been mostly young.

As a general thing, I think scholars leave the district schools at an earlier age than formerly. You will see by my report that only two scholars over 18 have attended the district schools of this town during the year. One of these did not attend but a few weeks. I know that, ordinarily, there is in every town of that age a large number that ought to be in school somewhere ; and if our district schools are for the education of the masses, that is the place for them, not the Academy. Our district schools must be kept at the highest point of respectability. I mean district schools —not graded schools. These can exist only in villages, and cannot be depended upon as the people's schools. The day we put any plan before the old system of district schools, and encourage our young men and ladies to look upon the school in their district as only primary, a school for children, and only fit to be taught by a woman, we take away the foundation of popular education. In the higher graded schools you always find a male teacher amply paid for his labors, but in the old district school a female, paid perhaps a quarter or an eighth as much as the male. This fact is enough to degrade the latter. Money is the standard of value, and every boy of eighteen sees the secondary value that is put upon the school in his district and he will not attend it. Is there not some danger that the district school will become primary in a bad sense of the term—a school for mere children? If we have females exclusively for teachers we must give them a manly value by paying them the full wages of a man, or we invite contempt of the school. I would ask you to notice the reports of the superintendents and see how many scholars in the State attend the district school that are over 18 years of age. Is the number mostly in the town where there is a graded school ?

You may not be able to see much sense in what I have written. The fact is, I fear we have said so much in praise of graded schools, that the common district school is a secondary thing—fit only for children, worthy to command only the cheap services of a female as a teacher.

A. STEVENS, Westminster.

---

I am satisfied that some improvement has been made in the condition of the schools in this town during the last year. More interest has been manifested by our citizens, and more competent teachers have been employed than heretofore. But here, as everywhere within the extent of my knowledge, there is still ample opportunity for improvement. The school-house must be made convenient and attractive.— None but competent teachers must be entrusted with the charge of our schools.— Scholars must attend upon the duties of school with regularity and punctuality. Parents should visit the schools. These are some of the means by which the schools of the State might be elevated to a much higher degree of excellence—means which are within the reach of any school district in the State. And the demand made of our citizens is, that they improve these and all other means, by which our common schools may be made what they ought to be. Is it an unreasonable demand? It is true that good school-houses and good schools cost money. But there is no cause worthier of the employment of money or earnest labor than that of educating the young—those to whom the best interests of society will soon be committed, and whose usefulness and happiness in the world will greatly depend upon the education which they now receive.

These are not new suggestions ; they have been repeated in the ears of the people of the State again and again, and they must still be repeated until our citizens are fully aroused to a sense of their importance, and set themselves earnestly at work to improve and perfect not only the common schools, but also the entire educational system of the State.

J. M. TYLER, Wilmington.

---

Notwithstanding the principal subject for thought and conversation with us is still our national struggle for a continued existence, yet the interests of our common schools are not forgotten. A marked improvement is discernible, owing principally

to the influence of the Teacher's Institute held in an adjoining town the last season. Some annoyance is experienced from the failure of district clerks in performing their duty in filling out and lodging in the Town Clerk's office the school Registers.

WILLIAM PIERCE, Andover.

---

My remarks are few and given in negatives. No superintendent should, in any case, grant a license to an applicant without perfect satisfaction of the ability of the applicant as a teacher. No Prudential Committee should engage a teacher to teach in his district without informing said teacher of what the district wishes and expects. No citizen of a school district should intermeddle with the management of the school without some extra cause. No teacher should assume the responsibility of school teaching without a consciousness of ability to thoroughly perform the same. No teacher should admit with impunity, disobedience to any wholesome rules and regulations in school. No teacher should suffer any interruption from any other scholars while hearing a class recite. No teacher should leave a class till they understand what they have been reciting. No teacher should use other people's eyes and ears, but depend entirely upon his own. The above aphorisms, I think, if attended to, will have a good effect in placing many of our primary schools in a more advanced condition than they are at present.

JOSHUA LELAND, Baltimore.

---

There has been an increasing interest in regard to our schools the past three years. It is no longer a matter of dollars and cents with the majority of the districts; but the real question with them are, "Who are the best teachers?" and, "How can we secure the best schools?" The School Registers are exerting a powerful influence. They are kept with great care and nearly all were properly filled out and filed the present year. Their influence is not wholly appreciated yet, nor nor can it be at present. This, like all other great reforms, must be gradual.

We have been fortunate this year in the selection of teachers. It is true that we have had a few schools that were not very successful; but the greater number have been excellent schools. Teachers have been well sustained by districts. Indeed we can have no true success in our schools unless the whole machinery works together. The Secretary of the Board of Education, the Superintendents and Teachers must work together and be sustained by the people if we hope ever to see a reform in our common schools. The teachers that have attended the Institutes have done very much better for it; improve the teacher and you improve the school. No consideration whatever should induce us to be deprived of the influence of the Teachers' Institutes.

Your Annual Reports are well circulated and read, and I should judge were having their designed effect.

It appears to me there is a great lack in the inhabitants in regard to properly arranging the school rooms and their surroundings. How shall they be made to feel that a good school depends very much on a comfortable and pleasant house and agreeable surroundings? In addition to this our teachers should be more practical and thorough. With these changes, we should see a great change come over our common schools.

N. L. BOYDEN, Barnard.

---

The schools in the town of Bethel have succeeded much better this year than last. The teachers have been more competent and better adapted to instruct and govern the schools. They have, as a general thing, kept their Registers in good order, and answered the questions required of them, with but few exceptions, in a very satisfactory manner. I can see that the clerks have improved in making out their reports. In the last Registers some of the questions have been made clearer to the comprehension of the clerks. It is very desirable to have a clerk who has be-

come familiar with his duty, to remain in office as long as possible. When the people become familiar with the practical operation of the present school regulations, the new law as it is termed will increase in popular favor and be better appreciated. We need not fear reducing our educational matters to too great a system of perfection. In military matters that army is the most efficient which is the best organized and disciplined. And so it seems to me in reference to our schools. When the law first went into operation, it was like managing an army of raw recruits. Now they are getting more accustomed to their duties, but they have not all yet become *veterans* in this new educational organization. The people dislike innovations. The force of habit is so strong, they like to travel in the good old ways and do as their fathers did. I believe when our present school system was adopted, it was a step taken in the right direction; but I am far from thinking that it is, even yet, brought to the highest point of perfection. Perhaps it was as much as the people were prepared to receive.

Every one who teaches should attend the Teachers' Institute, for it must be evident to every thinking and candid mind that the information and suggestions received from the subjects there presented and discussed, will have a great influence on the usefulness and success of our teachers. I always recommend them to attend if possible.

The Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board of Education needs no commendation to those who read it; and to those who do not, my highest encomiums will be of no use. I wish that every person in our State would carefully read it and ponder its facts and suggestions.

Every man who assists in awakening an interest in the cause of education is engaged in a noble enterprise, the result of which cannot be duly estimated in the age in which he lives.

S. A. PARKER, Bethel.

---

The experience of the past year has fully convinced me, that it is unwise to defray any part of the expense of our schools on the scholars. I am also decidedly opposed to putting up the board at auction, for frequently teachers are obliged to board at very unsuitable places. I hope the law will be so altered that the entire expense of our schools will be on the Grand List, and it be made the duty of the Prudential Committee to furnish wood and select a place for the teacher to board.

I am persuaded that Teachers' Institutes are doing much in improving our schools, and if teachers were required to attend at least one term before they could receive a license for teaching, we should have a class of teachers much better than we now have.

LEMUEL SHATTUCK, Bridgewater.

---

You again solicit from superintendents, suggestions and expressions of opinions upon such special topics, as may have occupied their thoughts and concern the improvement of our schools, particularly in regard to school Registers, Teachers' Institutes, and Annual Reports.

The best devised plan of men for the improvement of schools, or management of any business, utterly fails by neglect: only by bringing the parties interested in the matter, which, in this case is the whole community, to a full appreciation of its merit, can the desired result be obtained.

Without the Registers I see no way to ascertain whether our schools are improving or otherwise. Without a record, our whole system of common school education would be floating in the sea of uncertainty without rudder or compass. In this vicinity, I am happy to say, many are appreciating the school record. Some districts have the Register of the year's school at their annual meeting, that they may see the true condition of the schools, its defects, its wants, and thereby avoid future mistakes.

The value of the Teachers' Institutes is incalculable. In this State they form a great school for the teacher, the effects of which are plainly visible in every school taught by one having attended them. In my report to the town, I stated that the value of a teacher's labor to the school was enhanced from ten to twenty per cent. by attending the Teachers' Institutes.

The Secretary's Annual Report should be read by every one. No book of equal size, save the Bible, contains more useful and interesting information for the parent and guardian.

Z. G. HARRINGTON, Chester.

---

Our schools, both summer and winter, with only three exceptions, have been taught by females, whose literary qualifications are far above the average of former years.

Wherever even a partial failure has occurred, it is traceable to a want of good order rather than any other cause. Good order is indispensable to the success of any school; and the efforts of teachers to secure it, are, so far as my observations extend, more fully appreciated, which bespeaks more hopefully for the future.

In regard to School Registers, I have to say that they have been generally well kept. Teachers have, I believe, faithfully performed their part, and the returns of the district (how many pronounce that *deestrict!*) clerks are deficient only in some few particulars.

I really wish there was more *active* interest manifested by the people in our common schools. Parents should frequently visit the schools. To employ a teacher and set him at work, without ever going near to see what is being done, is like employing a person to plow and sow without having care for his work whether it be well or illy done. 'I regret very much to say that parents do not require their children to be punctual and constant in their attendance. Children cannot make great improvement while they attend school unsteadily. And nothing so disorganizes a school and puts hindrances in the way of the highest usefulness of many of them as tardiness and irregular attendance.

E. M. GOODWIN, Hartland.

---

The schools have been a little better this year than last. One of the greatest evils is irregular attendance and the great amount of tardiness. In the village this is a great hindrance to progress.

There are too many districts in town. Many of them are small ones. My annual report urged the importance of making the number less and establishing a school of higher grade. This is very much needed here.

I wish your annual reports could be read and studied more by the people. A thorough reading of them would be a great benefit to all who have to do with schools. The last report, especially, with its wise suggestions, its abstract of laws, and all necessary forms, is a valuable book for Superintendents, teachers, committees, and parents.

AUSTIN HAZEN, Norwich.

---

You are aware that nearly all the important facts in relation to the schools of this State must come from those who have them under their immediate charge; and that it is often the case that those to whom that care is entrusted are men of good business talent, but almost wholly unaccustomed to expressing facts of this kind in systematic order for the benefit of others; therefore, as we might expect, there is and will be a degree of uncertainty in all the statistical information, the perfect correctness of which is so desirable. But, notwithstanding this, I have given the answers to your very judiciously prepared statistical interrogatories, with a good degree of confidence in their correctness. There are, however, some difficulties that are not easily

overcome. Fractional districts are often so situated, that it is difficult to collect facts concerning them that can readily and correctly be applied, so that answers to your questions may be reliable. All the fractions of this town are connected to districts whose school houses are situated in the town to which such fraction is connected, and one of them is a regularly organized district of this town, but was joined by special act of the Legislature to a district in another town, just on the border of which the school-house is located. I have, however, returned this district as a fraction and not as an organized district. The statistical returns for these fractions are given in gross with those of the districts to which they belong, and are of but little use in obtaining positive results. But these difficulties still exist; since the schools have been furnished with the Registers, all statistical matters relating to the schools have been kept and collected with a far greater degree of accuracy than ever before. Teachers have generally spared no pains in giving that attention to them that their importance demands; and if the several district clerks would obtain and give the necessary facts relating to the financial affairs of their respective districts, all the desired statistical information could be easily and correctly gained.

The schools in this town have generally been successful though possessing very different degrees of merit. And still we have hope for the future, for a greater earnestness is felt by Prudential Committees, and those having charge of the schools, as manifested in the zeal with which they are securing teachers of the highest qualifications for their summer schools. An improvement is also made in the employment of female teachers for the winter schools. In the year ending March 31st, 1859, eight of our schools were taught by male teachers whose wages amounted to $436 and sixteen terms by female teachers at a cost of $377,49; making the amount paid for teaching during the year, $813,49. In the year ending March 31st, 1864, five male teachers were employed at a cost of $220,43 and 19 schools taught by female teachers at a cost of $509,25; making the amount for the year, $729,68.—Thus we see an improvement on the score of economy, if in nothing else; but during the past year, the schools taught by female teachers were among the first and best taught in the town. But as the schools advance we need a still higher and more thorough preparation for the work. We need a Normal School, where our teachers can be professionally educated for the important task before them, and where our teachers can be thus prepared and our schools graded as they should be; then, and not till then, will our hopes and highest expectations be realized with regard to the school system of Vermont.

HOSEA DOTON, Pomfret.

---

Our schools have done well the last year. There have been less failures than usual. Either I am greatly deceived, or there has been marked improvement within a few years. The schools are more thoroughly instructed and very much better governed. There is a laudable and increasing ambition in the different districts to have good schools. In my visits to the schools, I have always inspected the Registers, commenting freely on what I found, praising those who had no marks, often repeating the names of such, and mourning over a dark record. Gradually thus the attendance, both in regularity and punctuality, has improved. Registers are of special service in promoting and regulating the attendance. And yet I have often wondered that the attendance was so slow, for I have constantly urged upon the schools the loss which they sustain by absences, amounting in some cases to two-fifths, and even one-third. While a school has been thus diminished, and its usefulness diminished still more, it has *cost* just as much as though the attendance had been full. Vermonters calculate their loss and gain in business much more carefully. They are not willing to hire laborers in their fields, and then lose a third of their labor. They are not willing to keep flocks and be deprived of a third of the profits. And yet, in how many districts an examination of the Registers will show that amount of loss by a tardy and irregular attendance of the scholars. Many schools

with a full and prompt attendance might do more in eight weeks than they actually do in twelve. Four weeks in twelve lost! If the loss to the whole State were gathered up from the Registers, it would be found to be astonishingly great. Vermont men would not submit to it if it fell upon their *flocks*; why should they when it falls upon their *children ?*

For the three years past, the reports made to the town have been ordered by vote to be printed and circulated in all the families. In these reports topics of general interest were discusssed, and then, each school and teacher were noticed and reviewed with fairness, faithfulness and discrimination. As might naturally be expected, very close attention was given to the reports when read in town meeting. The people, teachers, and scholars were eager for the reading of them when printed. A very commendable ambition was felt in the different districts to have their schools excel; and thus the general interest on the subject has been manifestly rising, to the great gratification of the Superintendent.

C. B. DRAKE, Royalton.

---

In my remarks I shall principally confine myself to what has been felt and experienced in the discharge of my duties as town superintendent. Of the twelve school districts in Sharon, two have had no schools the past year. The other ten have had their usual schools. Some of these have had only cheap and indifferent teachers. The others have been favored with more than common instructors, and the pupils have made good and thorough progress in the different branches of study to which they have attended. There has been no year in which I have had the oversight of this work, when I was so well satisfied with the order, discipline, and direct progress of the majority of the scholars. They have been more punctual in their attendance, and more ambitious and prosperous in their studies. The Registers, too, have been more correctly kept than in some former years. They, for the first time, have been returned so that a full report could be made to the Secretary. Still, as to their perfect correctness I have some doubts. But improvement in things imperfect, though slow, is always encouraging. May they yearly go on to perfection.

Doubtless the Teachers' Institutes are of great benefit to those who attend them, an important and efficient aid in promoting education. Yet the fewness of these Institutes and the distance from some localities where they have been held, has rendered it impossible for some to attend upon them, so that only our largest places receive the full benefit of them.

I think our Annual Reports are a very great help to the cause of education. They awaken thought and greater interest in the public mind, and are receiving yearly more and more attention in the community. But while, according to the decision of the Auditor, the State will pay but one hundred cents, or one dollar for the Superintendents' annual report, the people cannot reasonably expect a very labored production.

PHILETUS CLARK, Sharon.

---

I will simply add to the foregoing statistics that the common schools in Springfield during the past year have, in some respects, been better than those of the preceding year, and, with three or four exceptions, have been very satisfactory to me and the people generally. There are too many districts in town, and consequently some very small schools and a lack of interest. Young and inexperienced teachers are engaged for such schools, because they can be hired cheaper, and cheap schools, follow. But little school apparatus is found in town. The people do not realize the benefits their children would receive from neat, commodious, and well-finished school rooms.

The Registers are better kept by the teachers than a year ago ; but many of the district clerks have shown both ignorance and carelessness in the performance of the duty assigned to them.

I wish every parent and teacher in town would read carefully your Annual Report. It would effect much good.

WM. H. HASKELL, Springfield.

---

It is incumbent as a duty, as I view it, upon every individual to render such aid and assistance as he may be able, to the agents of the State, exerting their energies and powers to raise the standard of general education, and to devise ways and means for such intellectual and moral culture and improvement of the rising generation, as shall prepare them for assuming advantageously the duties and responsibilities which, as citizens of their country, must necessarily devolve upon them. For this high and important object the Board of Education was created. This Board has steadily prosecuted its duties, aiming to gain the end for which it was created by elevating the character and increasing the efficiency and usefulness of the common schools of the State. Every citizen and patriot has a deep interest in the success of these institutions which have contributed so much hitherto notwithstanding their defects, to enlighten and advance the interests of the country ; in which also a large majority of those who are hereafter to manage the affairs of the country are to receive their education. It is apparent that much good has been accomplished by the enactments of the State Legislature and the efforts of enlightened individuals—friends of the cause in different parts of the country. And yet there is much to be done. I consider the Teachers' Institute one of the most important and efficient agencies for the improvement of the schools for which the State has made provision. The teachers of the common schools need lessons of instruction from their superiors in experience. They come many of them from our higher literary institutions quite well versed in the different branches of science which constitute the course of instruction in our common schools; but many of them being very young, are exceedingly deficient in that practical knowledge which is essential to the successful management of a school. Instead of being placed as guides or instructors for others, they need to be told how they should conduct and manage themselves. They exert an influence over those placed under them for instruction, and if that influence is in the wrong direction, those under them must suffer from its poisonous effects.

Teachers' Institutes as conducted in our State, are well calculated to shed much light upon the practical management and instruction of the common schools. The lectures given at these places by teachers of much experience, have had a highly beneficial influence upon teachers of common schools who have availed themselves of their advantages, and, consequently, the schools have been benefited by them. I trust that more will be done hereafter to increase their efficiency and to extend the sphere of their usefulness.

P. HASKELL, Weathersfield.

---

The schools in this town have been highly prosperous during the past year, with one or two exceptions. Those who have taken the most interest in public instruction think the condition of our schools the past year decidedly better than heretofore.

I think much is owing to the Institute held here last June, since which time there has been less of that parrot-like recitation, with which we are so familiar, and more interest has been manifested by parents. Yet there is chance for improvement in the matter of visiting schools, tardiness, boarding around, and deficiency of teachers in geography and grammar.

J. L. HARRINGTON, Weston.

---

In compliance with your solicitation, I will express my opinion very briefly concerning the operation of School Registers, Teachers' Institutes, Annual Reports, and the wants of our schools, &c.

I think the Registers work admirably, and are highly appreciated by most of the teachers. They aid materially in systematizing all of the business of the school room, and afford the only reliable index of the condition and progress of the schools, and of the degree of interest manifested in them by the people.

As to the Institutes, I believe it is impossible to overestimate their usefulness and importance. They are the grand desideratum for awakening the public to a proper and necessary interest in the cause of education, and in our common schools, the most efficient and practicable means for dispensing it among all classes and conditions of society. They supply in a good degree, the great want of Normal schools, to prepare our teachers for the arduous and responsible duties of their vocation, the necessity for which is very palpable, as so many engage in teaching who have no just and well-defined idea respecting the best modes of instruction and discipline. The only difficulty is, we don't have half enough of them. There is an urgent necessity almost everywhere, in the State, for the session of these Institutes to send forth their energizing and quickening influence to arouse the people from their apathy and indifference to the welfare of the schools, and to incite them to personal efforts for improving their condition and increasing their usefulness. We need live men sent abroad in all quarters to agitate the public mind, and infuse their own zeal in the cause of education into the hearts of the entire people; and I believe that Teachers' Institutes are "the one thing needful" for this purpose.

In regard to the Annual Reports, I will say in brief, that I wish they were inscribed in letters of living light in every household in Vermont, that the lessons of *duty* which they inculcate might be *seen* and *read* by every man, woman and child.

I will add that a majority of the teachers were young, and consequently could not have that judgment, discretion, and that acute knowledge of human nature which experience alone will give, and which is so essential for the proper discharge of the immense duties and responsibilities of the teacher; nevertheless a greater degree of success was attained than I expected, considering the many disadvantages under which some labored.

With all deference to your superior wisdom, larger experience, and more general knowledge of the condition and welfare of our schools, I must beg leave to say that I cannot fully concur with you in the conclusion that the substitution of *female* for *male* teachers has materially improved the condition of the schools, at least as far as *discipline* is concerned, for my observation and experience, very limited it is true, has convinced me that *many* females do not possess *stamina* and *positiveness of mind sufficient* to control some of the lawless and shameless vagabonds that create disturbance in schools, who respect nothing but positive, resolute authority, which does not, I believe, so generally characterize the administration of female as of male teachers.

DEAN CLARK, Rochester.

## STATISTICAL AGGREGATE FOR 1864.

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of families, | 57,000 |
| " children between four and eighteen, | 85,795 |
| " weeks of school by male teachers, | 10,413 |
| " weeks of school by female teachers, | 53,999 |
| Amount paid male teachers, | $53,400 |
| " paid female teachers, | 110,191 |
| " paid for board of teachers, | 99,222 |
| Paid for fuel, furniture, &c., | 30,662 |
| " erecting school houses, | 20,416 |
| " repairing school houses, | 11,198 |
| Amount Public money distributed in 1862-3, | 104,754 |
| Amount received on Grand List, | 126,834 |
| " received by tax on the scholar | 44,948 |
| " of wages, board and fuel, | 276,611 |
| Weeks of school at expense of district, | 31,429 |
| Average voters in school meeting, | 14½ |
| Number of Registers required, | 2,966 |
| " different teachers, | 4,841 |
| " private and select schools, | 329 |
| Number attending private and select schools, | 7,884 |
| " weeks of board and fuel by tax on the scholar, | 24,722 |
| Aggregate average attendance between four and twenty, | 44,807 |
| Whole number between four and eighteen attending school, | 73,259 |
| Number attending school between eighteen and twenty, | 2,765 |
| Number of tardinesses, | 701,994 |
| " dismissals before hour of closing school, | 95,532 |
| " scholars without absences, | 6,708 |
| " instances of corporal punishment, | 5,328 |
| " visits by Superintendents, | 6,578 |
| " visits by Prudential committees, | 2,797 |
| " visits by others, | 42,182 |
| Nnmber studying Reading, | 63,937 |
| " " Spelling, | 62,601 |
| " " Penmanship, | 29,220 |
| " " Arithmetic, | 41,413 |
| " " English Grammar, | 13,239 |
| " " Geography, | 25,372 |
| " " Composition, | 6,912 |
| " " History, | 2,570 |
| " " Other Studies, | 3,483 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of Dictionaries belonging to District, | 110 |
| " Globes " " | 190 |
| " Maps, " " | 353 |
| " Blackboards " " | 2,539 |
| " Clocks " " | 116 |
| " Thermometers " " | 38 |
| " Teachers that have taught before, | 3,364 |
| " " " " in same district, | 1,025 |
| " Teachers boarding "around", | 3,214 |
| " Teachers teaching without certificates, | 49 |
| " whole Districts, | 2,461 |
| " fractional Districts, | 221 |
| " Districts entirely without school during the year, | 196 |
| " Districts entirely without school by vote of majority, | 18 |
| Amount of Superintendents' bills as claimed, | $4,764 |
| Number of Districts not filing Registers, | 152 |
| " Reports of Superintendents printed, | 27 |
| " Academies, | 66 |

Such is the statistical aggregate for the past year, and as the presentation of so many important facts relating to the schools in the way of an aggregate statement is apt to detract from the legitimate and proper force of particular facts or groups of facts, it may be well to give my own views of the condition of the schools, as drawn from personal observation and correspondence, in connection with a brief discussion of the force and significance of some of the most prominent and important facts.

## THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE.

The whole number of children between the ages of four and eighteen years, reported in 1863, was 85,562, while the number reported for the current year is 85,795, showing an increase of 233. It is proper to remark in the first place, that the official returns in reference to the number of heads of families, and the number of children of school age, have never been as reliable as they ought and easily might have been. The lists hitherto required by law to be taken of parents and children, have never been taken with the care and accuracy which the law and the public good required. This has occurred mainly on account of the little estimation in which statistical knowledge has been habitually held by the major portion of our citizens, and, although it may to some extent be helped by legislation, must depend for thorough correction upon a change of public sentiment in regard to the importance and value of accurate statistical knowledge. And, in order to this change of sentiment, it is, and always will be, necessary to present and re-present the fact which cannot be disputed, that an accurate and entirely reliable knowledge of all important facts that have essential bearing upon any proper subject of legislation is an indispensable condition precedent to sound, and safe,and wholesome, legislation upon that particular subject. When this truth is fairly and

generally appreciated, then and then alone will public sentiment demand from all officially concerned in the procurement of statistics, that care and faithfulness which is necessary.

Then the School Registers will be valued as they deserve, and teachers and district clerks will be constrained by a declared public opinion, to perform fully their several duties in reference to them. Then certain and reliable information can and will be furnished of the working of the school law.

An annual exposition of the number of children of school age, and reliable statement of the very large proportion of such children that depend exclusively upon the public schools for such culture as they will ever receive away from home, can hardly fail, in time, so to fix general attention upon the magnitude of the interest involved in the direction of our schools, as to relieve them from the effects of the prevalent indifference by which they have so long been cursed.

The whole number of children between 4 and 18 reported is 85,795; the number of them that have actually attended the schools is 73,259. The number of pupils between 18 and 20 that have attended school is 2,765; and if the number actually attending bears the same proportion to the whole number as rules in the case of children between 4 and 18, then the whole number of those under the law entitled to attend the public school between 18 and 20 must be 3,357, and the whole number of those entitled to attend school must be 89,152. The whole number attending private and select schools is reported at 7,884. Of the whole number then entitled to attend school 81,268 have received their whole school education at the public schools; in other words, the statistics show that less than one tenth of the pupils of the State have attended any other than the public schools, and therefore it appears that the public schools by their mental and moral training give character and scope to more than nine tenths of all the children of the State. But clearly an agency that thus gives character to more than nine tenths of the growing children of the State, may with little exaggeration be said to give character to the State. How then can any sane man look upon the interests involved in the proper management and direction of the public schools as secondary or in any sense subordinate? In the light of these facts then, the welfare and prosperity of the public schools may truly be said to be the paramount interest of the State and of each individual as a citizen of the State.

## DURATION OF THE SCHOOLS.

The duration of the sessions of the public schools is of late years regarded as one of the most significant indications of the general interest felt in popular education; and it is pleasant to know from the statistics that in our State, notwithstanding the effect which the absorption into the ranks of the army of a very large proportion of youngerly men must have produced upon the attendance upon school, there has been not only no

diminution of the duration of the schools, but there appears a slight increase. The aggregate number of weeks of school, both male and female, sustained during the year closing March 31 '63, was 64,044, while the aggregate number of weeks of school sustained during the year closing March 31 '64, was 64,412—leaving a difference in favor of the year last past of 368 weeks. The average duration of the schools for the year '62 and '63 was 23½ weeks; the average duration for the year '63 and '64 has been a little over 24 weeks, in other words, the schools of the preceding year remained in session a little over 45-100ths of the year, and have remained in session during the last year a little over 46-100ths of the year, giving an increase of average duration of the schools for the last year of one per cent. An increase of only one per cent. seems intrinsically to be small, but where it is remembered that the largest average duration of the schools of any whole State in the United States, so far as reported, is only 66 per cent. and a fraction, an advance of one per cent. is hopeful, and when considered with reference to the unprecedented demand for labor caused by the war, even this small advance is full of encouragement.

In connection with this topic I deem it a duty again to call attention to the probable efficacy of a modification of the law in regard to the distribution of the public money in securing a prolongation of the duration of the public schools.

Regarding the necessity of general intelligence to the permanent prosperity of republican institutions as conceded, and in view of the undoubted pecuniary ability of Vermont to adopt all measures that are demonstrably necessary to her own growth and strength, it is not an unreasonable proposition, to say that the public schools, where, as the statistics of the present year show, nine out of every ten of the children of the State are to receive all the culture that schools will ever give them, should remain in session at least for from 7½ to 8½ months, i. e. for from 60 to 70 per cent. of each year. It would be better for the State that the opportunities for receiving a culture that is admitted to be necessary should thus be augmented; and it would be better for the children that they thus for a longer proportionate time should be subjected to the moral and mental discipline of the schools. All this is so manifest that as we look over the statistics, we wonder that the people of a State like Vermont, apt enough to take not a little pride in their established reputation for general intelligence, should year after year allow their public school-houses to remain vacant for more than half of the time. This discrepancy between the ostensible and sometimes ostentatious appreciation of the theory of the public school system, and the actual practice under it, is so great that the immediate inference is that there must be, either patent or latent, powerful causes for such discrepancy. And a little examination reveals at least two features of our school law whose tendencies to shorten the terms of schools are apparent upon even slight consideration.

Wherever in any of the States a public school fund is found to exist, the proceeds of which are periodically distributed in aid of the various

school municipalities, it will be found, and I think invariably, that a certain amount of local expenditure to be provided for by self-imposed local taxation, is made a condition precedent to the receipt of any portion of the general public fund. This local expenditure is commonly measured by the duration of the schools thereby sustained; and therefore the common proviso is, that no school municipality shall receive any portion of the proceeds of the general school fund, unless it shall have contributed to the support of its own schools a certain fixed amount of money, or fixed proportion of the assessed value of its real or personal estate, or, as is more commonly the provision, shall have sustained a legal public school upon its own local funds, for a certain fixed number of weeks or months. This fixed time, during which schools shall be thus supported, varies in the different States adopting this method. In Michigan, for instance, the time is fixed at three months. In Maine no local municipality can receive any portion of the public money, unless it shall during the previous year have raised by taxes an amount equivalent to sixty cents for each inhabitant. In Massachusetts by general law every town is compelled to sustain at least six months school in the year, and can have no portion of the proceeds of the public school fund, unless it shall have expended for teachers' wages, board, and fuel and expense of making fires and taking care of the school-house, an amount equivalent to $1.50 for each inhabitant.

In Vermont, the support of two months' school upon its own funds by each school district, is made the condition precedent to its receiving any share of the public money. And, in practice, the law not specifying the kind of school that shall be sustained by each district, a two months' school in the summer season, where no fuel is necessary, taught by a female teacher at little expense, is supposed to constitute a full compliance with the law. From the statistics the average wages of female teachers for the last year is $8.16. The expense of a two months' school then, would consist of two months' wages for a female teacher $16.32, and two months' board, which at $2 per week would be $16—making in all $32.32. Now the whole number of children between 4 and 18 reported is 85,795, and the whole number of districts, whole and fractional, being 2,682, the average number of resident children between 4 and 18 in each district is 32. The whole amount of public money distributed in '62-3 was $104,754 which gives $1,22 to each of the resident children between 4 and 18. Each district then, having an average number of 32 resident children between 4 and 18, for each of which it receives $1.22 from the public money for its compliance with the terms of the law by supporting a two months' school at an average expense of $32.32, receives $39.04. It is submitted that such a condition precedent to the reception of a proportion of the public money, is altogether too light and easy to give adequate and proper stimulus to the support of thoroughly good schools for a sufficient length of time.

Again, whatever be the period selected, during which districts or towns are required imperatively, as in Massachusetts, or persuasively as in Vermont, to sustain schools upon their own funds, as it is long or short, it will by serving as sort of guide, in fact, control the time during which, for the remainder of each year, custom will require the schools to be open. In other words, the average duration of the schools in the State will in all probability be less when the law imperatively requires school to be supported by local taxation for only two months, than it would be if the general law required the schools to be supported thus for three or four months. Hence it may well be doubted whether the duration of the sessions of the schools and of course their efficiency, would not be increased by a lengthening of the term during which the various districts shall be required to sustain schools upon their own funds, as a condition upon which their receipt of any portion of the public money shall be based.

Another cause of the comparative brevity of the sessions of the public schools in this State, may be found in the method adopted in making distribution of the public money to the various districts. This matter was particularly alluded to in the report of last year, but if at all instrumental in shortening the duration of the schools, the importance of its consequences will sufficiently account for its re-introduction.

Under existing laws the public money is distributed annually to the various towns in proportion to their respective population. Then annually at a time appointed, the selectmen of each town distribute the distributive share of the public money already apportioned to such town, among the various districts of such town that have complied with all the conditions of the law, in proportion to the average daily attendance of the children of such district upon the public school of such district, this average daily attendance to be ascertained by dividing the aggregate attendance upon each public school, by the number of days during which such school has been sustained. A little consideration will show that while such a method of distribution tends very manifestly to encourage regularity of attendance upon the schools while they are in session, it not only does not tend to induce a lengthening of the terms of the schools, but must necessarily have a strong tendency to encourage short sessions. For it is plainly more difficult to sustain a high rate of average attendance upon a school that is sustained eight months, than upon one that is sustained only four months. And the rule, other things being equal, will be found to be, that the shorter the term of any school, the higher will be the rate of average attendance. Thus the effect of the law of the distribution of the public money, under which the distributive share of each district increases or diminishes in direct proportion to the increase or diminution of its average daily attendance, operates directly and powerfully to discourage lengthened terms of school. And this method of distribution is also unjust and unequal in its bearing upon different districts. And as illustrative of this fact and to conclude what I desire to say in this connection, I will take the liberty to insert an extract from the Report of last year.

If district A with an earnest desire to promote the welfare of its children sustains a school for eight months in a year with an average daily attendance of eighteen; while district B with a more scrupulous economy of its dollars, although having the same number of children of school age, sustains its school for only five months, and from the very brevity of its sessions, with an average attendance of twenty pupils;—district B will, under the law, receive a larger portion of the public money than district A, because the distributive share of a district depends upon its average daily attendance, without any reference to the length of the term. Thus the law operates unequally upon the two districts, and with manifest injustice to the district which has taxed itself the highest in support of its schools.

In the original draft of the school law of 1858, the distribution of this portion of the public money was directed to be made to the various districts in proportion to the *aggregate* daily attendance upon the schools. By this means regularity of attendance and length of term were both taken into account, and each district would receive a share of the public money directly proportioned to the efforts it might have made in the support of schools. But during the passage of the act through the Legislature, its phraseology was changed and the distributive share of each district was made to depend upon the *average daily* attendance instead of upon the *aggregate daily* attendance. I have always doubted the wisdom and expediency of the change, and desire to commend this subject to the special consideration of the Board.

## EXPENDITURE FOR SCHOOLS.

The interests of education will continually demand that public attention should, as far as practicable, be frequently drawn to the magnitude of the expenditure that is inevitably involved in the support of a State system of public schools. However frequent may be the iteration of the statement, that the pecuniary and material proofs of the importance of our public schools only present the lowest grades of the claims of education to the interest and support of a free people; and whatever degree of truth may pervade such statements; still it is certain, that in the practical administration of the school system, the chief obstacle in the way of wholesome and progressive improvement is found in a prevalent want of interest in the public schools, growing out of an impression that, as compared with other great State interests, the management and direction of the common schools is, upon the whole, rather a small matter, hardly worthy the amount of attention that is claimed for it from the people or from the Legislature. Of this fact plenary evidence is furnished by the reluctance of leading business men to accept and discharge the various duties of the necessary school offices in the different localities; by the difficulty of securing a fair and decent attention to the condition of the schools in the town meetings of the different towns; by the general refusal, in the Legislature and elsewhere, of men who occupy high posi-

tions either socially or politically, to take any prominent part in the public discussion of educational questions of State or local policy. Hence, it is hardly possible to call the public attention too frequently or too forcibly to the fact, abundantly shown by the annual statistics, that the necessary expenditure for the schools in each year is, whether in the town or the State, in time of peace, larger than all other expenditures which the people are called upon to defray.

The leading features of the expenditure for the support of schools, for the year ending March 31st 1864, as appears from the statistical summary, are as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Amount paid male teachers, exclusive of board, | $53,400 |
| " female " " " | 110,191 |
| " for erecting school houses, | 20,416 |
| " for repairing " | 11,198 |
| " for board for 64,412 weeks estimated at $1.50 per week, | 96,618 |
| Amount paid for fuel, furniture and incidentals, | 30,662 |
| Amount of Superintendents' bills, as claimed, | 4,764 |
| Making a total of | $327,249 |

which is $16,601 more than the expenditure of the previous year for the same items. So great an expenditure is well worth the attention, not only of the particular friends of popular education, but as well of every citizen, who, whatever other post he may occupy, is certain to be a tax-payer.

## TEACHERS—THEIR NUMBER.

The number of different persons employed as teachers in the common schools during the year is reported to have been 4,841. There are in the State 2682 districts, including both whole and fractional, of which more than 2300 must have employed two different teachers during the year in order to have given employment to the number of different teachers reported. The too prevalent custom of changing teachers unnecessarily, and the evil effects resulting therefrom have been the subject of frequent remarks in former reports, and a mere presentation of the statistics showing that no improvement in this particular is apparent during the past year, is perhaps all that is necessary.

## MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS.

The steady and, in many parts of the country, rapid substitution of female for male teachers is a characteristic feature of modern educational progress, and so far, at least, as primary and secondary schools are concerned, is one that meets with almost universal commendation. It will be seen from the statistics that the substitution mentioned has been progressing during the last, as during former years, in our State.

The number of weeks of school by male teachers reported in 1863 was 11,156, in 1864 it was 10,413. The number of weeks of school by female teachers reported in 1863 was 52,908 and in 1864 it was 53,999. Thus there appears to have been during the past year a diminution in the number of weeks of school by male teachers of 723, and an increase in the number of weeks of school by female teachers of 1,091. Of the common schools then, during the past year, more than 83 per cent. have been in charge of female teachers, and less than 17 per cent. in charge of males. But a careful examination of the official returns of the town superintendents of schools shows that, as a whole, the schools of the State were never in a better condition; and my own personal observations entirely confirm this view. Judging by the tenor of the facts reported then, the change in regard to teachers, alluded to, is not only not to be regarded with apprehension, but is to be cordially welcomed.

And this matter is of more importance to us at this time, on account of the very strong probability which exists that this progressive substitution of female for male teachers will go on for an indefinite period. Very many of the male teachers of our State are now in the ranks of the Union army, and few of them will ever again return from the exciting life of the army to the quiet of the teacher's vocation. Again, when this war for the nations life shall have resulted in favor of the Union and of liberty, and it would be almost treasonable to suppose any other termination possible, a fresh and vast field of labor for enterprise in all its manifold and various channels will be opened to energetic young men from this as from other States. and they will respond to the invitation; and we must expect a loss from emigration under this new stimulus greater even than we have experienced. As a necessity then, the schools will more and more pass into the charge of female teachers.

It is worthy of notice too, that this change will not be confined to the primary and elementary schools alone. Schools of a higher grade must, from the same causes be entrusted to the instruction of female teachers. And the fact that in the normal and other higher schools of other States, and in the academies and higher graded schools of our own State, females have now for several years been teaching with great success, and to the general acceptation of the communities more particularly interested, should have, and will have a strong tendency to give permanence to this inevitable increase of the number of female teachers, and to make it satisfactory to the people.

All of these considerations give prominence and importance to the consideration of the topic of

## TEACHERS' WAGES.

From the statistics a slight advance appears in the wages received by teachers during the past year. The average wages per month exclusive of board reported for the year 1863, was for male teachers, $18.20; for the year 1864 it has been $20.48, exhibiting an advance of nearly 12 per cent.

The average wages paid female teachers in the year 1863 was $7.76; for the year 1864 it has been $8.16, which is an advance of 5 per cent. This apparent advance in the wages of teachers, bears so small a proportion to the actual increase in the price of all necessary articles, for which the income of teachers, as of others, must of necessity be immediately expended, that in reality, it indicates a diminution rather than an increase. No class of our citizens have suffered more from the effect of the increased and increasing prices that have ruled the market in reference to all the necessaries of life than those who, like teachers, are employed for the same prices that have long prevailed, or nearly the same. In all fairness and equity then, the slight absolute advance in the the amount of wages paid must be admitted to be, in fact, no actual advance at all. Again and again it will continue to be necessary to call attention to the necessity which does now, and always will exist, in order to secure the necessary power and efficiency in our public schools, that the compensation offered to teachers should be at least as large as the compensation offered in other and ordinary channels of business for the exercise of the same labor and ability that are indispensable in the schools.

The average compensation of $20.48 for males, and $8.16 for females, which is ascertained by the statistics to have been paid during the past year, is not sufficient to compete with the prices that labor has of late commanded in many other vocations, and indeed in nearly all others, so as to secure for our schools the command of the talent and skill and experience which they need and should have.

When we reflect that the average given, is the average for all the schools of every grade, and that the teachers of the higher grades universally, and of common schools in very many localities, are receiving a compensation much higher than the average, it is plain that very many teachers in the State must have received for their labor much less than the average compensation. It is not creditable to our people, or of good promise to the improvement of our schools, that in many localities, it is common to offer the teacher less compensation for labor in the schoolhouse as teacher, than would be demanded and paid for the same person's labor in the more common grades of manual labor. The average wages paid in some of the neighboring states is much larger than in our own. Estimating the board at $1.50 per week, Maine paid in the year reported, in 1863, to males, exclusive of board, $22.01, females $8.76; Connecticut, males $26.02, to females, $10.14; Massachusetts to males $41.71, to females $13.95. The same rule prevails here that governs every other market of labor; other things being equal, the quality of the labor will be in proportion to the rate of compensation. An increase of the compensation paid to teachers is just and reasonable, and would favorably and immediately affect our schools.

## WAGES OF FEMALE TEACHERS.

The great difference in the wages paid to male and female teachers throughout the country, is a branch of this subject of teachers' wages that is now beginning very deservedly to attract the attention of those who wish well to our schools. If only the primary schools were in charge of female teachers, there would be no sufficient reason for making as marked a distinction between the wages of males and females as in reality exists. The increasing appreciation of the relative importance of elementary schools, may be said to be one of the most decided, and one of the most encouraging characteristics of the prevalent public sentiment of the last ten years or more. Indeed, in the opinion of many of the wisest educators of the present day, in no grade of schools are skill and capacity more necessary or more important as characteristics of the teacher, than in the primary schools, which to a greater extent than does any other grade hold the keys to the character which is to result from school training. And it may well be doubted whether the early culture of the untrained faculties of young children does not require, in order to reasonable success, more of genius and power in the teacher, than is requisite in imparting instruction of a more advanced character to other children, whose intellectual capacity, and the rapidity of whose mental progress, have been to a great extent already determined by the nature and scope of the mental discipline received in the primary schools.

But as has been already remarked, female teachers are employed in the normal and higher graded schools of other States, and in the higher schools of our own State with marked success. Better instruction cannot be found in the whole country than is given by females in some of the normal schools of our neighboring states. And in several towns in our own State, Academies that have languished to the very verge of complete extinction, under the charge of a succession of male teachers of average competency, have recently passed into the charge of females and are now in a more prosperous condition than ever before within a number of years.

The competency of female teachers to teach successfully schools of the highest grades known among us, and the certainty of a continual substitution of female for male teachers in our public schools, being ascertained by fact, the very great inequality of the wages of male and female teachers becomes a topic of importance in a practical point of view and has various claims to general attention.

The importance of making of the calling of the teacher, a profession, of such character that it shall be respectable in the estimation of the community, and so far desirable as to offer reasonable inducements for its selection as a life-calling or profession by those who are qualified to teach, will be denied by no person who is conversant with the character and wants of our schools. But how can it be done? And by whom is this profession to be filled? It can only be accomplished on the one hand by

elevating the standard of qualification which the teachers shall be required to possess, and on the other hand by tendering a rate of compensation that shall enable this vocation to compete with other callings in the inducements offered to competent ability and qualification. Again, as we learn from the statistics, we shall presently be compelled to rely upon female teachers almost exclusively for our ordinary public schools. More than four-fifths of our schools are already in the charge of females, and year by year, beyond a doubt, this large proportion will be increased.—Sound policy requires then that the progressive improvement of our schools should be, so far, secured by an increase of the wages of teachers, and particularly of female teachers upon whom, in the main, our future dependence must rest.

And justice and fair dealing require the same thing. Not one single just reason can be given why a man for teaching a particular school should receive any more compensation than we are willing to give a female for teaching with equal success the same school. Success in teaching is of no particular sex, and the just and equitable rule should be adopted of giving compensation in direct proportion to the excellence of the work done, without reference to the sex of the laborer. A glance at school statistics show that the relative compensation paid to male and female teachers in several of the New England States is as follows: In Maine—exclusive of board—to males, $22,01 to females, $8,76; in New Hampshire to males, $18,35, to females, $10,12; in Massachusetts to males, $41,71, to females, $13,95; in Connecticut to males, $26,02, to females, $10,14; in Vermont to males, $20,48, to females, $8,16.

Another consideration that deserves to have weight in the discussion of this particular topic is derived from the fact that in the vocation of teaching, is offered to females a fair, proper and reputable occupation which may employ to the advantage of community and to her individual profit, all the characteristic excellencies of woman's nature. Here her moral and intellectual qualifications, her devotion, her unselfishness, her calm, quiet resolution, her love of children and natural aptitude to teach, may all find ample scope, and profitably to the public good. To a man, a thousand different avenues to success and competence are open; from selling tape and needles to hunting Leviathan from his Arctic hiding places; no occupation is too small or delicate, and none is too daring and mighty for man; but how few are the means of self-support and independence, which public sentiment, slavishly bound in the chains of its own self-imposed conventionalities, dares yet to consider appropriate to woman. She may sew, she may "do house-work," she may minister to the sick in a private way and she may properly teach quite small children, at half the price that would be given a man. But farther she must not go. The fact that teaching is thus recognized as a very "proper" sphere for woman, is a substantial basis, in consideration of the necessity of avocations that are thus recognized, upon which may rest a claim not that females may be permitted to teach at half the usual price, but that

female teachers should be allowed to receive whatever compensation would be considered reasonable and fair for a male teacher, provided that her work is equally well done.

The cognomen of merely a "mean man" would be considered extravagantly eulogistic of one who, having the power to do so, chooses to abuse or defraud a woman because she is a defenceless woman; and whoever has dared to do so has never failed to receive, as he deserved, the contempt of every fair man. It is difficult to understand how a general public sentiment, that habitually boasts of the high respect in which women are held, as the best and most significant achievement of a christianized republicanism, and which visits with its scorn and contempt any individual who defrauds a woman, can tolerate a general custom prevalent in every community, by which in the public schools, half the compensation that would be freely given to a man teacher, is supposed to be sufficient for as competent and successful a teacher in the same school, "because she is a woman."

## GRADED SCHOOLS.

There are various topics which have annually received consideration in the Reports from this department, and to which it would now be well again to call particular attention, but circumstances connected with the present condition of the State system of education combine, at the present time, to give such prominence to the desirability of profiting by every opportunity to perfect, and reduce that system to one harmonious whole, that the consideration of the practical measures that may now be adopted to promote that important end, will make it inexpedient to discuss many minor topics in the present Report, and they will be deferred.

The topic of Graded Schools, has received much attention, during the two or three years last past, in obedience to the specific instructions of the Board; it has been made prominent in all the public discussions in localities where its consideration would be likely to have any practical bearing, and a very perceptible increase of appreciation of Graded Schools has resulted. This change of sentiment has not as yet manifested itself in the actual establishment of many new Graded Public Schools, for time is required to carry into effect so radical and important a change of policy. But in many localities, the public attention has been considerably aroused, and a number of communities in different parts of the State are now ready to welcome a substitution of Graded Schools for the Academies located in their vicinity.

One strong and well endowed Academy in each of the different counties is fully competent to do all the purely Academic work in the educational system of the State, and the multiplicity of more Academies, compelling them to depart from their own peculiar sphere of labor, and trench upon the legitimate and proper field of the Public School, has had a tendency to lower the Public Schools in the estimation of the peo-

ple, and thus, by diminishing the interest with which otherwise their work would be regarded, has operated to prevent the progressive improvement of the public schools. Hence there can be little doubt in the minds of those who are unprejudiced and well informed as to the practical working of our various educational institutions, that sound policy requires the extinguishment of a large proportion of the existing Academies, the strengthening of those which are allowed to survive, and a gradual substitution of Graded Schools for those that become extinct. This may be accomplished without an entire relinquishment of the corporate existence of the Academy, as has, through the assistance of special legislation, been done in Montpelier, St. Albans, and Swanton, where the Academies have been retained, but so modified as to constitute the highest department of the local system of Graded Schools. Or the same end may be practically attained by a relinquishment of the corporate existence of the Academy and a surrender of its property, either with or without condition, to the public school organization of the locality, as has been done in the case of the Union District in Burlington.

A notable instance of the last description has occurred in the town of St. Johnsbury recently. Here for many years has been in successful operation an Academy of the first class, under the instruction of one of the wisest and most effective teachers in the State. A local system of Graded Schools, with its different departments, under a competent and successful teacher has likewise been in operation for several years, with its school house for the high schools in the immediate vicinity of the Academy. It was found in practice, that even when under the respective management of able and high-minded teachers, and in the midst of a community second to none anywhere, for the purity and elevation of its moral and social atmosphere, an inevitable conflict did really subsist between the academy and the high school, and each was in some measure, even under remarkably favorable circumstances, injuriously affecting the interests of the other. But within the last two years, the District in which both the Academy and the High School were included, has erected an exceedingly beautiful and commodious house at a large expense, and the Academy has been so transformed as to become the High School of the local system of Graded Schools, the schools of the second grade are to be instructed in the new school building, and the primary schools are to assemble in school houses located in different parts of the village district But all the schools constitute one whole, and the former teacher of the Academy is made Principal of the High School and the whole group of schools is intrusted to his supervision and control. Admission from the lower to the higher grades is regulated by the results of thorough written examinations, and the schools of each and every grade are open and free to every class in the community. Thus in one of the most important towns in the State, has been organized and put in operation a system of Graded Schools, which in some respects is more thorough and perfect in its organism than any other in the State. The relinquishment

by merger of the corporate and separate existence of the Academy, and the placing of all the schools of every grade under the supervision of the Principal of the High School, are very important features in a practical point of view, and it is to be hoped that the adoption of a similar system may occur in other localities.

The adaptability of Graded Schools to the educational wants of any community, and their adequacy to the full accomplishment of all the work of any Academy for which they may be substituted, together with the facility with which they may be made to co-operate effectively and harmoniously with any Academy that may be retained, provided both are under the control of one and the same power, and the perfect accordance of the principles upon which they stand with the spirit of republican institutions, all sufficiently commend them to general commendation and adoption.

It is also to be remarked that the adoption of the Graded School in any locality is a decided step towards the perfection and completion of a well ordered and harmonious State system of education, and therefore well worthy of consideration. But this matter having been quite fully discussed in the last Annual Report, will receive no further attention here.

The importance to the promotion of the efficiency of the State Educational System, of a concentration of educational strength, considered in its general bearings, and the legislation of the last session of the General Assembly in the incorporation of the Vermont State University both tend to give prominence and great interest to the consideration of the possibility of bringing the general policy of concentration or consolidation to bear upon the higher as well as the lower grades of educational institutions.

It has, therefore, been deemed proper, and indeed necessary, to ask in the present report attention to the consideration of the

## POSSIBILITY OF THE JUNCTION OF THE COLLEGES OF THE STATE.

The other official doings of the year, have as usual consisted in the discharge of the ordinary duties required by the law, and have been characterized by nothing unusual, except that an effort was made to give some prominence to the discussion of the feasibility and desirability of taking measures to reap some benefit from the recent Legislation in reference to the incorporation of the Vermont State University and Associate Colleges.

Early in the history of the State, its legislation had established an educational system, reaching through all the different grades of necessary culture, and consisting of a single State University, a Grammar School in each county, and public schools in each town. This system was simple in its character, and, could it have been fairly and thoroughly tried, would undoubtedly have proved itself to be adequate to the educational wants of the whole people. But very soon after its first construction, it became

so entirely changed by the increase of the number of colleges and of Grammar Schools and Academies, that what was originally a simple and well-adjusted and harmonious system, became a mere aggregation of discordant and independent parts, each working disconnectedly and without special reference to any other.

In the progress of years, as education began to receive more of public attention, and frequent discuesion revealed more clearly the absolute necessity, in order to the perfection of any general system, of a precise adjustment with regard to each other of the various grades of educational institutions, so as to secure, as far as practicable, a harmonious coworking of all in the accomplishment of general results, it became more and more apparent to thoughtful men, that the departure from the original plan of the fathers was clearly a blunder, and that the earliest possible return to that original plan was eminently desirable; and that the practical steps in that direction were, first the diminution of the number of Grammar Schools and Academies, by the gradual substitution therefor of public graded schools, and second the reduction of the number of higher institutions by a union of all the colleges in the State.

For many years the wisdom and economy of such a movement have been appearing with increasing clearness and power, and, so far as a substitution of public high schools for academies is concerned, the movement in the right direction may be said to have been fairly commenced, and is progressing favorably. But, although at different times the necessity of a union of the colleges has been forcibly presented to the general mind, and has been favorably received; and, although in the year 1847-8 a vigorous effort to accomplish such juncture was actually made, and was nearly successful, still, such and so many and so seemingly insuperable were assumed to be the difficulties in the way of such a juncture, that for many years no real effort has been attempted; and the friends of education had long despaired of the completion of such union until the actual dissolution of one or other of the existing colleges, or the occurrence of some unexpected but favorable contingency, should furnish a favorable opportunity for the attainment of a result which however desirable, seemed to be otherwise hopeless.

The Act of Congress approved July 2nd, 1862, appropriating certain portions of the public lands for the support of Agricultural Colleges in the various States that by legislation should accept such appropriation conformably to the requirements of that act, and the acceptation of such land-grant by the State of Vermont, seemed to many minds to present precisely the favorable opportunity for consummating a union of the State colleges that had long been wished. And thus the act of the Legislature during the past year, by which provision was made for the incorporation of the Vermont State University and Associated Colleges, was recognized as a seizing of a favorable opportunity for the accomplishment of a project, that had long been recognized by intelligent friends of education as

indispensable to the completion of a symmetrical system of State education, and so necessary to the educational progress of the commonwealth.

But in this act of incorporation, the time within which its terms and conditions must be complied with was necessarily limited, and thence arose a necessity for prompt and thorough agitation and discussion, that the public mind of the State might be prepared to take necessary action in due season.

Deeply impressed with the idea that there now could, if the people wished, be brought to a successful termination some plan of union of the various colleges, and as I thought, clearly perceiving the necessity of an early commencement of that agitation that must of course precede any wise and desirable action, and fully convinced that, from the intimate connection and inter-dependence of the various grades of educational institutions, the prosperity of the common schools would be immediately promoted by any measure that should add to the efficiency of the colleges, I felt it to be my duty to hasten on and promote the agitation of the general mind in reference to this important matter. Accordingly I prepared and circulated in the month of June last, a circular upon the question, which, as the matter still stands open and undetermined, it seems proper to reproduce in this Annual Educational Report.

The circular was as follows :—

---

## CAN THE VERMONT COLLEGES BE UNITED ?

---

*To the Town Superintendents of Schools ; to all who are particularly interested in the common schools; and to all thoughtful and liberal friends of a State Educational System.*

In the first constitution of the State of Vermont, as adopted by a Convention of Delegates from the different towns, held at Windsor on the 2nd of July, A. D. 1777, it is declared that "a school or schools shall be established in each town, by the Legislature, for the convenient instruction of youth ;" and that "one Grammar School in each County, and one University in this State, ought to be established by direction of the General Assembly."

Here is a historical fact of great value in the educational history of the State, and exceedingly creditable to the actors in that convention. They were men of strong natural powers, but of limited culture, and this fact adds to the value of such a public acknowledgement of the necessity of a liberal provision for mental and moral culture in order to the permanence and growth of the commonwealth whose foundations they were laying.

It is worthy of observation, too, that in the first legislation of the State, is there to be found a clear and full recognition of the intimate relations of necessity existing between the common schools, the Grammar Schools, and higher institutions of learning; the very constitution itself embracing all the various grades of educational institutions in one single but comprehensive clause, and attributing an equal importance to each.

And a similar recognition is traceable in all the subsequent legislative action of the State, receiving at one time a more explicit announcement than at another, but constantly re-appearing from 1777 to the present time. In the act of 1856, organizing a Board of Education, it is made a part of the duty of that Board from time to time to "recommend to the Legislature such alterations, revisions or amendments of existing laws, relating to common schools and seminaries of learning, as in their judgment are demanded in order to the perfecting of a system of general education in the State, &c." And in the same act the Secretary of the Board is directed "to exert himself constantly and faithfully to promote the highest interests of education in the State, &c."

Thus, from the first legislation of the State, Seminaries of learning, of all grades, seem to have occupied the attention of the State and engaged its interest; and Colleges and Grammar Schools as well as Common Schools, have always been considered as proper objects of legislation, and as indispensable parts of a State system of Education. And it is noticeable, that when either of the grades is mentioned, it is, whenever spoken of generally, mentioned in connection with the others; and habitually considered as a part of one general system, including each and all, in one whole. Not only did higher education receive an explicit recognition of its importance in being specifically mentioned in the first draft of the State constitution; but the consummation of the original plan by the establishment of a State University occupied the attention of the wiser friends of general culture, both within and without the Legislature, until legislative provision was actually made for the accomplishment of that purpose. In Thompson's Gazettee may be found an account of the incorporation of the University of Vermont as follows:

"The establishment of a University in Vermont engaged the attention of several of the leading men in this State, from the first organization of the government in 1778; and in the subsequent grants of townships, one right of land was reserved in each for its support. The quantity of land thus reserved amounted to about 29,000 acres, scattered through about 120 towns and gores, and lying chiefly in the northern part of the State; but nothing further was done towards the establishment of a University till some time after the close of the revolution. When Dartmouth College was brought within this State, by the union of 16 towns from New Hampshire with Vermont, the General Assembly voted to take that institution under its patronage.—In June 1785, after the final dissolution of the union of a part of New Hampshire with Vermont, the Legislature of Vermont, "under a consideration of the importance of those institutions to the world at large and to this State in particular," and on application of President Wheelock, made a grant of a township of land to Dartmouth College and Moor's Charity School. Encouraged by this success, the trustees of Dartmouth College, the next year, applied for the sequestration to their use of the lands which had been reserved, in the New Hampshire grants, for the propagation

society and for glebes, and in the Vermont grants for Academies and University, giving assurance that they would on their part take the business of education in Vermont under their especial charge and supervision.

This application produced considerable discussion and tended to arouse some of the leading men in the State to the importance of setting about the establishment of a College or University which the State could call her own. In 1785, Elijah Paine of Williamstown presented a memorial to the Legislature, offering to give £2,000 for the establishment of a college, on condition that it should be located in that town.—But the subject was postponed, and the Legislature could not be brought to take the matter into serious consideration till the October session in 1789. The subject, however, had been fully discussed in the public papers, and at this session a memorial was presented by Ira Allen, with an offer of £4,000 by himself, and of £1,650 more by other individuals, for the establishment of a college to be located at Burlington. With a view of ascertaining what part of the State would afford the most liberal support to an institution of this kind, after a long discussion, agents were appointed in the several counties to obtain donations and subscriptions. Nothing further was done by the Legislature till 1791. This year the subject was again called up, and it was finally decided that a College or University should be established. The next business was to fix upon its location. Several places were proposed, and, the ballots being taken, the result was as follows: 89 for Burlington, 24 for Rutland, 5 for Montpelier, 1 for Danville, 1 for Castleton, 1 for Berlin, and 5 for Williamstown. Having fixed upon the location and the trustees whose names were to be inserted in the charter, the bill incorporating The University of Vermont, was passed without opposition and became a law on the 3d of November, 1791."

By the same account, it appears that it was not till the year 1800, that the corporation of the University was fully organized by the appointment of a President, and the entry of several young men upon a collegiate course. The first commencement was held in the year 1804.

It is thus plain from the whole history, legislative and special, of the University of Vermont, thus far, that the intention of the legislature, and of leading minds in the State, was to establish one State University, and only one; and that this single State University should become the head of the educational system of the State. And among the most thoughtful and judicious friends of education throughout the State, it has ever been a source of great and increasing regret that this original design should, under any circumstances, have been departed from in the establishment of any other college.

But in the interval between the granting of the charter for the University of Vermont and the actual completion of any proceedings to make such charter and the previous reservation of lands available for the purposes of higher education, by the complete organization of a college corporation and the erection of a college building, another institution of similar character was established at Middlebury, of which enterprise Mr. Thompson gives the following account:

"A county grammar school had been established at Middlebury in 1797, and more than $4,000 was shortly after raised by subscription, mostly in Middlebury, to defray the expenses of erecting a suitable building for its accommodation. In 1798, while the building was in progress of erection, Dr. Dwight happened to be at Middlebury, and, as little had been then done towards carrying into effect the act establishing a University at Burlington, he encouraged the people of Middlebury to prosecute the plan of establishing a college at that place. They accordingly applied to the

Legislature for a college charter, with the hope on the part of some, that they might also obtain the lands which had already been granted to the University. They succeeded in obtaining an act of incorporation dated November 1, A. D. 1800, with the title of the "President and Fellows of Middlebury College," but all endowment by the State was refused.

The Rev. Jeremiah Atwater, who had been a tutor in Yale College, and who was at that time Principal of the Addison County Grammar School, was constituted President of the College by the act of incorporation, and under his superintendence the institution was immediately organized, and seven students admitted. The first commencement was held in 1802, when only one student received the degree of A. B.; but the students increased so rapidly that in 1808 the graduating class numbered 23."

Here again we find, in the refusal of the Legislature, even when granting another collegiate charter, to make any partition of the lands previously reserved for the endowment of the "one University" mentioned in the first constitution, at once a recognition of the necessity of one University as essential to a complete state educational system, and a determination not to weaken the pecuniary strength of the one University already chartered.

It is also, from the account given of the origin of Middlebury College, probable, that no attempt to found another collegiate institution would have been made at that time and perhaps never would have been made, if immediately after the granting of the charter of the University of Vermont, measures had been taken to carry out the design of that charter and make the previous grants of land available by establishing and putting into active operation a collegiate institution under the charter, at Burlington.

But an interval of some nine years of comparative inaction followed the granting of that charter, before the first class entered upon a regular course of collegiate training; and in this interval, the College at Middlebury was incorporated and put into active and successful operation.

And thus established and put in operation at nearly the same time, these two Institutions have continued in operation under difficulties and embarrassments of the most serious nature, and have each accomplished a valuable work in the education of the State.

But in the opinion of many and good men the very co-existence of two similar institutions of co-ordinate character and powers, has, in fact, without the existence or suspicion of any intention on the part of any one to produce such a result, retarded the progressive improvement of our active instrumentalities for the promotion of higher culture, and has tended to lessen, and has actually diminished the general interest of our people in that intellectual and moral discipline, that comes, and can only come, from collegiate education.

Profoundly impressed, for many years, with the desirability of a consolidation of the collegiate interests of the State; firmly persuaded of the entire practicability of effecting a junction of these two colleges, if only the right spirit and feeling in reference thereto could possibly be aroused, and personally knowing that many, very many, of the best and

truest friends of education throughout the state fully shared my own convictions and hopes; I ventured to allude to this possible junction of colleges in the last annual report.

The acceptance, on the part of Vermont, of the Congressional grant for the establishment of an Agricultural College, seemed to offer a most favorable opportunity to bring the matter before the public mind, and, not suspecting that any such reference was about to be made from any other source, it was thought best to add to the discussion in the last Report, of the subject of graded schools, some thoughts on the importance to the completion of our State educational system of a strengthening of our Colleges by union.

The following is that portion of the Report referred to which bears upon this subject:

As we survey the educational fields at the present time, and note the discordance and jostling between the various elements, that if working harmoniously together would constitute a complete educational system, extending from the elementary school to the college, we are almost inclined to believe that they exist by accident and not in accordance with any certain plan or design. But if we look through recent legislation, back to the time when the educational legislation of our State began, we shall see that the founders and fathers of the State originally had a well-defined plan, which they supposed sufficient for the complete education of the youth of the commonwealth. They required common schools sufficient for the education of all the children to a certain extent to be sustained in every town. They made provision for a Grammar school in each County, from time to time granting aid from the State for their endowment. And that their work might be complete, they established a State University.

And had that original plan never been changed or interfered with, every child in the State at the present time would enjoy better opportunities for thorough culture than are now given by all the various Schools, public and private, academies and colleges in the State.

But the unity and harmonious action of the original plan of our fathers has been sadly interfered with and almost destroyed, sometimes by the disastrous effects of legislation, and still more often by the results of the careless action of towns, communities and individuals.

The apathy and carelessness of individuals and communities allowed the public schools to become degraded in character, and so, increased the natural tendency to desert the common schools and depend upon select and private schools and academies, for the instruction of children in studies legitimately belonging to and required by law to be taught in the public schools.

Then, by legislation of a comparatively recent date, the power and efficiency of the Grammar schools originally supposed to be sufficient for all requisite academic instruction, and in point of fact adequate thereto, were seriously impaired by continually recurring division and sub-division of the State fund established for their support.

By the careless action of towns, they being invested with the supreme control of the boundaries of school districts, a constant tendency to the division and sub-division of school districts, with cause and without cause, has existed, which has frittered away the real strength of the school district organization and very much diminished the efficiency of the schools.

And the interests of a higher education have also been similarly and injuriously influenced, by the establishment of subsequent and rival collegiate institutions.

I am well aware of the delicacy and difficulty, and, indeed, the danger of venturing even to touch the subject to which I have last alluded; but knowing the inti-

mate connection and relation subsisting between the various grades of the educational institutions of the State, and how absolutely the welfare of each particular grade is dependent upon the success of each and all of the other grades, I cannot, although my official position connects me more particularly with the public schools, and perhaps in the view of many, exclusively so, refrain from calling attention to some of the evil consequences resulting from what now appears to have been an unnecessary and unwise multiplication of colleges.

Recent events in the history of our country, by exhibiting the advantages which have inured to the managers of the existing rebellion, from the large supply of men who have received a military education from the great number of military schools and colleges that have flourished within the bounds of the seceding States, have so far revolutionized the public sentiment of our State in regard to the expediency and necessity, through the establishment of institutions expressly devoted thereto, of providing for the requisite military education of our people, as to have secured in a measure the permanent prosperity of the military school established at Norwich, in our State.

And therefore in what follows special reference is made to the existence in the immediate vicinity of each other, of the colleges at Burlington and Middlebury, as co-ordinate, and under the circumstances, almost necessarily rival institutions.

None can appreciate more highly than I do the vast amount of good for the race and the world, that has been effected through the instrumentality of these two institutions. The thousands of noble men who have graduated from their halls, and through the inspiration there received have gone forth into every part of our country, with heart and hand and voice ready for every good work and word, are themselves the best witnesses both of the efficiency of the instruction they have received, and of the persistent zeal and self-sacrificing devotion with which these two institutions have been fostered and cherished, by the comparatively few generous and liberal men upon whom their support has mainly devolved.

But however great may be the measure of good which has been accomplished by the *two* institutions, it may well be doubted whether a still larger amount might not have been effected by either one of them in the same time, if the other had never existed.

Admitting the superior excellence of both of these colleges, and attributing to neither any superiority over the other, it is demonstrable both from reason and by facts, that the collegiate interests of our State have suffered from their very co-existence.

The existence of both of these institutions has been one continued contest with pecuniary embarrassment.

Located as both of them are in the midst of a population of more than common intelligence, and capable of estimating, and in fact rightly appreciating the value of higher culture, and in a State the economy of whose civil government and the general prosperity of whose citizens, give it ample ability to make munificent endowments for literary purposes if it were so inclined, these two institutions claiming and receiving a comparatively high character for literary excellence, have struggled along side by side year after year, in a never ending effort to prolong existence by constant appeals, at one time to the local pride and liberality of our own State, and at another to the generosity of friends of education resident elsewhere.

And during all this time more native Vermonters have graduated from Dartmouth and Cambridge, and Amherst, and Williams, and Yale, and Union, than from both these institutions together.

The literary strength and the pecuniary and numerical weakness of these two colleges, have for many years fastened the attention and awakened the serious consideration of friends of education throughout the State; and from personal intercourse with many of the wisest friends of high culture throughout the State, I well know that for several years a conviction has been gaining strength continually, of the necessity of a return to the original educational policy of the State, by a consolidation of the University of Vermont and Middlebury College.

If this by any means could be accomplished, a decided change for the better in various respects would immediately follow.

1st. The single institution that would result from such consolidation, would become an object of State pride and concentre upon itself a general interest of much wider and more uniform prevalence, and of far greater intensity than has ever been granted to the existing colleges.

2d. Being the sole institution of a higher character in the State, and having gathered about it a more general and intense interest, it would afford an opportunity for the exercise of legislative patronage, which has been hitherto prevented by the existence of a local prejudice and partisan hostility, which has induced liberal minded legislators rather to deny all legislative aid for educational purposes than to grant to either of two institutions pecuniary assistance which could not be well claimed or expected by both.

Legislative aid would be claimed, and it would be granted, and before the lapse of many years a single literary institution would receive endowments that would plant it upon a firm and substantial pecuniary basis, and thus with increasing independence it would exert a wider and stronger influence for good.

3d. The fountains of private and individual munificence which have been closed to a great extent by the indisposition to choose between two institutions of equal excellence, by granting to either pecuniary assistance which could not be granted to both, and the bestowal of which upon either would excite the jealousy and hostility of the other,—these fountains would be opened, and liberal minded men of opulence and generosity by ample contribution of their means to the endowment of the one State University, would here, as in other States has been done, connect their names with the history of high mental and moral culture.

4th. Thus gathering strength and power from various sources and thereby becoming more efficient and more worthy of support, the one State University would attract to itself hundreds of young men, who in the absence of any especial predilection for either of two rival colleges, now seek in colleges of other States a culture no better than would be given here.

I have felt constrained from a sense of duty to introduce this matter in the present report for various, and as I think sufficient reasons.

1st. As I have stated, I personally know, that much of anxious thought has been given to this matter of the consolidation of these institutions by many earnest friends and graduates of both institutions in all parts of the State, who have expressed to me a desire that the subject should in some way be brought prominently before the public mind.

2d. Under existing circumstances in our State, the consolidation of these two colleges almost necessarily involves the selection of either Middlebury or Burlington, as the site of the institution resulting from such consolidation.

And the recent acceptation by this State of the Congressional grant of lands for the establishment of an Agricultural College, seems to afford a better opportunity than may ever occur again, to make compensation in some degree for the loss which may result by the non-selection of either of these two towns as the site for the location of the consolidated college, by tendering to it, its selection as a site for establishment of the proposed Agricultural College, perhaps in connection with that of a State Normal school.

3rd. The suggestion of this matter seemed indispensably necessary to the completion of the discussion of the importance of a more general adoption of graded schools.

The necessity for general intelligence and virtue is the impregnable basis upon which every system of State educational institutions rests.

But if such necessity be admitted, and intelligence to even a slight degree be indispensable to the prosperity of the State, who shall say when and where the necessity for further culture ceases, or precisely to what extent it is expedient and desirable that the culture provided by the State through the establishment of educational institutions, shall proceed.

The same inexorable logic which fully vindicates both the prosperity and necessity of the establishment and support of a common school of the lowest grade, to be supported by a general taxation, is amply sufficient to warrant by the same reasoning the indefinite extension of the scope and reach of the culture that may and of right ought to be thus freely given by every republican commonwealth to each and all of his children irrespective of their circumstances or social condition.

The educational institutions of the city of New York, furnish the most beautiful exemplification of the beneficent operation of liberalized and christianized republican institutions that ever existed. There through its Ward schools, its Grammar school, and its noble *Free Academy*, all supported by general taxation, and all equally open to every child of every class and every condition, the son of the millionaire and the son of the washerwoman, side by side and hand in hand, without any distinction except such as may arise from a difference of merit, may and do proceed from the primary school, through all the various intervening grades, finally to step from the portals of the Free Academy, having there received every advantage afforded by the highest collegiate institutions in the land, fully prepared mentally and morally to act well their part in the great drama of life, by the faithful discharge of all the difficult duties of American citizenship,

A consideration of the policy of a more general adoption of graded schools, has naturally and almost necessarily led to a discussion of the expediency and desirability of a solidification of the higher educational interests of the State. Could these two measures be accomplished, and all her educational institutions be placed upon the same basis, the unity and beauty of the original design for the thorough education of the people of the State would be restored, and our noble State would have a complete educational system, whose rod of power by smiting the rocky obstacles that impede and obstruct the upward march of the coming generations, should unseal the very fountains of knowledge, and proffer a participation in the healing and purifying influences of their flowing waters, without money and without price, to every son of woman, regardless of his condition or circumstances, who might truly thirst therefor.

The same matter was presented to the attention of the Legislature, by His Excellency the Governor, in his annual message, as follows :

## AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE—LAND SCRIP.

The Legislature at its last session passed an act "providing for the appointment of agents to receive and dispose of the land scrip to which this State may be entitled under the Act of Congress, approved July 2d, 1862."

The act, after appointing the agents to receive the scrip, and conferring upon them certain powers, and imposing upon them certain duties, authorizes the Governor of the State to receive proposals for such donations of land, buildings and funds, as may be tendered from any portion of the State, or from any person or persons, for the purpose of establishing a College, according to the provision of the act of Congress. The act also provides, "that all moneys derived from the sale of the land scrip shall be invested by the Treasurer of the State, in safe stocks, yielding not less than two per cent. upon the par value of the stock, and the interest of the fund shall be appropriated for the purpose declared in the act of Congress."

The act of Congress donates to each State, land to the amount of thirty thousand acres to each Senator and Representative in Congress, the proceeds of the sale of which, or of the land scrip to be issued therefor, is to be invested in stocks of the United States, or of the States, or some other safe stocks, yielding not less than five per cent. upon the par value of said stocks, and to constitute a perpetual fund, the interest of which is to be inviolably appropriated to the endowment, support and maintenance of at least one College in each State, where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to Agriculture and the Mech-

anic Arts, in such manner as the Legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life,—and further providing that any State which may take the benefit of the provisions of the act, shall provide, within five years from the date of said act, at least one College, as described in the act, or the grant to the State to cease ; and requiring the State, by its legislation, to express its acceptance of the provisions of the act within two years from the date of its approval.

This brief synopsis of the general features of the act of Congress will enable you to understand more readily the position which this State, by its action at the last session of the legislature, occupies in reference to the subject. The act of last fall expressed the acceptance, by the State, of the provisions of the act of Congress, within the prescribed period. It also appointed agents to procure the land scrip from the United States government, to which this State is entitled, to dispose of the same, and invest the proceeds of the sales in safe stocks, bearing not less than five per cent. and appropriated the fund to establish a college, as required by the act of Congress.

The agents appointed under the act will, in due time, submit a report of their doings. I understand, however, that application has been made to the Secretary of the Interior for the land scrip, and that the scrip has already been, or will soon be, issued by the State.

There remains now but a little more than three years, within which time the State must comply with the provisions of the act of Congress, and establish a college for the purposes specified, or the grant, as to this State, is to cease.

The shortness of the time, the importance and magnitude of the enterprise, its effects upon the educational interest of the State, and the great variety of questions involved, justify me in calling your attention to the subject at this time.

By the terms of the grant there will fall to the share of Vermont, one hundred and fifty thousand acres of land, which, at the minimum valuation of government lands, is equivalent to one hundred and eighty-seven thousand five hundred dollars, which, safely invested in our own State stocks, bearing six per cent. interest, would yield an annual income of eleven thousand two hundred and fifty dollars, for the support of the institution to be established ; or, computing the valuation at double the minimum price, which it is not unreasonable to expect to realize for the scrip, and which is the rate of railroad grants, the valuation would be equivalent to three hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, yelding an annual income, for the purposes contemplated, of twenty-two thousand five hundred dollars. These valuations of land, or amounts to be realized from the sales of the land scrip, will be varied according to circumstances, and may be enhanced or diminished according to the location, and the judgment and skill in making sales of the same, and a variety of other causes that may contribute to appreciate or lessen the demand for them. Taking into account the tide of emigration setting towards this country, growing out of the efforts being made, and the various organizations which have been formed, in various parts of the country, to stimulate and encourage it, it is but reasonable to suppose, that with proper care in the location of the lands, and judgment in the sales of the scrip, at least the last figures named above may be realized to the State.

The object of this generous grant is fully expressed in the act itself, "the endowment, support and maintenance of at least one college, where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, *in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes, in the several pursuits and professions in life.*" A most worthy object indeed—and sustained by a most munificent grant,—available to every State, and abundant, if properly managed, to secure the desired end—the education and consequent elevation of the masses of the people. Fully harmonizing with the genius of our democratic institutions, utilitarian in its scope and plan, favoring no privileged class, but generously opening broad the door for the liberal and practical education

of the industrial classes, affording them access, not only to the higher branches of a scientific and classical education, but superadding to this a systematic and thorough training in the every-day, practical, and hitherto almost untaught, science of agriculture and the mechanic arts.

To Vermont this scheme has a peculiar value and importance. Eminently practical in all her pursuits and interests, with a population hardly equalled, certainly not surpassed, in intelligence and virtue, her hardy sons only need the stimulating influences which a thorough education in such an institution, properly managed, would afford, to place them in the foremost ranks among the cultivated and refined, and secure to her a position for intelligence, wealth, influence and refinement second to none in the great sisterhood of States.

The grave question, however, arises, how the benefit to be derived from such an institution can be best secured, Shall it be established as a separate and independent institution, in which shall be taught all the higher branches of a scientific and classical education, with a school for military tactics, and the agricultural and mechanical branches? This is, manifestly, the design and scope of the grant. But can such a college be sustained, and yet, justice be done to other institutions, already established in the State, and which, to a greater or less extent, have always been under its fostering care? Can a department of agriculture and mechanic arts, and of military tactics, be attached to one or the other of these institutions, without creating local jealousies, and in this way secure the benefits of the act?

There are now in the State two Colleges and one Military School,—each of them established under the authority of the State Legislature, with certain powers and privileges, and each having been made the beneficiary, to greater or less extent, of gifts, bequests and endowments, and yet, so far as my knowledge extends, neither of them is fully self-sustaining, and although they all rank high as seminaries of learning, and have accomplished a good work in the cause of education, numbering among their alumni many of the noblest minds of the country, of whom the State and the institutions may well be proud, yet, in financial resources, they have not that healthful vigor and strength, necessary to a full and proper developement, and without which it is, and ever must be, impossible to realize the true idea of their creation.

If a plan could be devised, by which the several institutions could be combined into one, uniting the strength and resources of all, and adding to this the departments contemplated by the acts of Congress, and securing thereby the funds to be received from the grant of lands, then, indeed, might be realized the true idea of a University for the State, an institution which would justly be the pride of the State, and which, without being its beneficiary, would yet receive its liberal countenance and its patronage. For such an institution, in all its various departments, the best talent of the country could be secured, and a rank and character given to it that few institutions now enjoy.

I am by no means unmindful of the difficulties that lie at the threshold of such an enterprize. There are local questions and jealousies to overcome, all the feelings which so strongly attach to Alma Mater, and a variety of difficulties, that will naturally occur to the minds of all. Still, are not the benefits to be derived from a combination of these several institutions, and the establishment of one, on the basis which I have suggested, sufficient to override all these objections and difficulties.—Will not the new impulse to be given to the cause of education and the facilities to be afforded to the industrial classes in the State, through the agency of a well organized institution of this kind, be sufficient inducement to overcome local prejudices and feelings and other minor difficulties that may stand in the way?

There is another feature connected with this subject, which may not be unworthy of consideration.

By the act of last fall, the Treasurer is authorized "to invest the proceeds of the sales of the land scrip in some safe stocks, yielding not less than five per cent. per annum;" and the act of Congress authorizes the investment in United States stocks, or in State stocks. The amount to be realized from the sales of this scrip, as has already been stated, will vary according to circumstances, but it is not unreasonable to hope that it may reach the highest figures named.

The present funded debt of the State, as now authorized, bearing six per cent. per annum, is one million six hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

May not a portion of this debt be permanently merged in this land-scrip fund, and thus the State be benefitted to that extent, in a permanent investment, the interest of which shall be paid to her own institution, and for the benefit of a cause, so commendable as that of the educational growth and prosperity of her own citizens.

Whether any action is required at the present session of the Legislature in reference to this subject, is left entirely for you to determine. The suggestions which have occurred to me I have given, merely for your consideration, and not as seeking to direct your action. If the attempt to unite the several institutions should be deemed advisable, and it should be found practicable to do so, some legislation will, doubtless, be required, as the charters creating them do not, I think, contemplate any such union.

Whether it may be advisable or not to pass an enabling act, at the present session, to provide for such an event, if the public and the patrons and friends of the institutions should desire it, or whether it may not be sufficient to refer the whole subject to a Board of Commissioners, to inquire into and report at a future time, are questions for you to determine. It will give me great pleasure to conform to, and to aid any course of action which the Legislature may be pleased to adopt in the premises.

To this presentation of this important subject, thus fairly and ably made by the Governor, the Legislature responded by a reference of this portion of the Governor's message to the educational committees. Subsequently an act intended to promote the junction of the existing colleges was introduced and referred to the consideration of a large special committee, in which every county in the State was represented; and at their hands received a protracted and careful consideration. And after a public consultation of the Presidents and many friends of all the existing colleges in conjunction with the Board of Education and the educational committees of the Senate and House, the following act was passed by the Legislature.

## No. 60.—AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE VERMONT STATE UNIVERSITY AND ASSOCIATE COLLEGES, AND TO APPROPRIATE THE INCOME ARISING FROM THE PROCEEDS OF THE SCRIP FOR PUBLIC LANDS, GRANTED TO THIS STATE UNDER THE ACT OF CONGRESS APPROVED JULY 2, 1862.

SECT. 1. Corporators. Name, purpose and powers of Corporation.

SECT. 2. Corporators constituted a Board of Trustees. Trustees may confer honors and degrees, make by-laws, &c., fill vacancies in said Board, annually elect a President and other officers. Term of office.—May remove officers.

SECT. 3. The three existing Corporations, or either of them, may become united with this Corporation, if they so elect, before the first day of November, 1864.—Said Corporations may transfer all their property, franchises, &c., to this Corporation, subject to any liens incident thereto. To leave copy of proceedings for record in the Secretary of State's office. Such of said existing Corporations as shall have complied with the foregoing provisions of this Section shall become united with this Corporation on the first day of November, 1864. Transfer of property, franchises, &c., to this Corporation, to be effectual, &c., without any other deed than the vote of such corporations. Provisions in case the University of Vermont shall unite with this Corporation. This Corporation may maintain suits on all rights of action transferred to it under the provisions of this Section. *Proviso.*

SECT. 4. This Corporation to be liable for all debts, &c., of such of the existing Corporations as may transfer to it their property, &c.

SECT. 5. Location of Corporation, in case only one of the existing Corporations unite with it.

SECT. 6. Commissioners appointed to locate Corporation, in case all, or any two of the existing Corporations become united with it. Decision of Commissioners to be final. Commissioners may fill vacancies in their number. Shall give notice by publication, &c., before proceeding to locate. Corporation to be located in one of the towns where existing Corporations uniting with it are located. Commissioners to give hearing to parties interested, and take into consideration condition, &c., of existing Corporations, local advantages, &c.

SECT. 7. In case any or all of the existing Corporations shall unite with this Corporation, said Corporation shall receive semi-annually, the interest upon the fund derived from the sale of Land Scrip, also the net proceeds of the rent of such lands.

SECT. 8. Corporation to maintain a course of instruction in conformity to act of Congress. In case separate department, &c., be established, whole income of Scrip to be devoted to such department.

SECT. 9. Corporation to make and distribute reports.

SECT. 10. Corporation not to receive any portion of income from said Scrip untill it shall contract with this State to perform all the requirements, &c., of this act.

SECT. 11. Board of visitors constituted. Duty of said board.

SECT. 12. This act to be void unless one or more of existing Colleges shall unite with this Corporation before November 1st, 1864.

SECT. 13. Act to be under the control of the Legislature.

SECT. 14. Act takes effect from its passage.

*It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:*

SECT. 1. That Justin S. Morrill of Strafford, John Gregory Smith of St. Albans, Hiland Hall of Bennington, Frederick Holbrook of Brattleboro, Peter T. Washburn of Woodstock, Pliny H. White of Coventry, Paul Dillingham of Waterbury, Davis Rich of Shoreham, and C. A. Thomas of Brandon, together with such other persons as shall hereafter be elected and designated by the trustees of any of the existing colleges in this State, pursuant to the provisions of this act, as members of the board of trustees, shall be, and hereby are, created a corporation under the name of the Vermont State University and Associate Colleges, for the purpose of promoting instruction in such departments of learning as are usually taught in universities, including military tactics and such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, and as such corporation may have a common seal, may sue and be sued, take, hold and convey real and personal estate, and otherwise have all the rights incident to corporations.

SECT. 2. The persons hereby incorporated, and their successors, shall be a board of trustees, who shall have the general management of the affairs of said corporation, and shall have power to confer all such honors and degrees as are usually given in colleges and universities, including any separate degrees connected with military and agricultural sciences and the mechanic arts; and they may also make all needful by-laws and regulations for the proper government of said corporation, and of the teachers, students, and all other persons connected therewith; and they shall also have the power, and it shall be their duty, to elect persons to fill any vacancies which may occur in the number of said trustees by death, resignation, or otherwise, and they shall annually elect a president, who shall be, *ex officio*, a member of said corporation, and also a secretary, treasurer, librarian, and such officers as their by-laws may prescribe, who shall hold their respective offices until others are chosen in their stead, and may at any time remove said officers if they shall think proper.

SECT. 3. The three existing corporations in this State, viz: the President and Fellows of Middlebury College, the University of Vermont, and Norwich University, or either one or more of them, may become united and incorporate with the corporation hereby created, in the following manner, viz: Their respective boards of trustees or the board of trustees of either one or more of them, may at any time before the 1st day of November next, at any legal meeting, duly warned and notified for that purpose by vote of such board, elect to become united with the corporation thereby created, and for the purpose of such union may elect seven persons of their number to become members of the corporation hereby created, and of its board of trustees; and also at such meeting may by vote transfer, grant and convey to the corporation hereby created, all the property, both real and personal, with all the rents, uses, rights, immunities, privileges and franchises, and rights of action, belonging to their respective corporations, so far as such transfer can be made, not inconsistently with the condition of the grant or conveyance by which they hold the same, and subject to any liens, conditions or trusts incident thereto, to be held by the corporation hereby created, for the purposes and uses contemplated in this act; and on or before said first day of November next, may leave for record, and cause to be recorded, in the office of the Secretary of State, in the book of records, a true and attested copy of the record of all the proceedings of the meeting or meetings at which the votes aforesaid, of their respective boards of trustees, shall have been passed, duly certified by their secretary; *whereupon*, on said first day of November, 1864, such of said existing corporations as shall have voted in the manner aforesaid, and caused a copy of the record to be recorded, as aforesaid, shall thereby become united and incorporate with the incorporation hereby created, and the persons elected as aforesaid shall become members of said last named incorporation, and of its board of trustees, and such vote of transfer shall be effectual to pass the said property, rents, uses, rights, rights of

action, immunities, privileges, and franchises, with the liens, conditions and trusts incident thereto, to the corporation hereby created, without any other deed, transfer or conveyance whatever; and in case the said University of Vermont shall become united with the corporation hereby created, in the manner aforesaid, such vote of transfer shall have the effect to include and convey the right to the rents and uses of any lands belonging to them, whether now leased or otherwise, and particularly the right to the rents and uses of all such lands as have heretofore been reserved in any grants or charters of land in this State, for the purposes, and for the use and benefit of a college; and the corporation hereby created shall, in that case, have the same right in respect to said lands and to any leases of the same, and of the rents arising out of the same, that said University of Vermont now have, and; in all cases when any leases or rights of action are transferred as aforesaid, the corporation hereby created may maintain suits thereon, in their own name. *Provided*, the rights of all parties in respect to such suits shall remain, and the same defences shall be made as if such suits had been brought in the name of the corporation making such transfer; and in case any of the property, rents or uses which shall have been transferred as aforesaid, shall have inured to the corporation making such transfer, by any grant or conveyance, by virtue of which said existing corporation is charged with any trust, or is required to perform any duties, in such case the corporation hereby created shall, in all respects, execute such trusts, and perform the same duties, as the corporation which made said conveyance was at the time under obligation to perform.

SEC. 4. The corporation hereby created shall be liable for the debts and liabilities of any of the said existing corporations who may, as aforesaid, transfer to it their property and effects, to the extent of the value of the property thus transferred.

SEC. 5. If one only of said existing corporations shall become united with the corporation hereby created, in the manner provided in this act, in that case the corporation hereby created shall be located in the same town where such existing corporation is now established.

SEC. 6. If all or any two of said existing corporations shall become united, as aforesaid, with the corporation hereby created, in such case its location shall be established in the following manner, viz:

The following named persons, to wit: Benjamin R. Curtis of Boston, Edwin D. Morgan of New York, and John A. Andrew of Boston, are hereby appointed a board of commissioners to locate the same, and to determine where the same shall be established, the decision of a majority of which board shall be final and conclusive, and in case either one of said commissioners shall decease, or from inability or other cause, shall refuse to act, the remaining two shall have power to elect some suitable person to act with them in his stead. And before proceeding to determine such location, said commissioners shall give public notice of the time and place of hearing, by publishing the same three weeks successively in some newspaper printed in each of the Counties of Windsor, Addison and Chittenden; and said commissioners shall have power to adjourn said hearing from time to time as they shall think proper; and said board of commissioners shall fix such location in one and either one of the towns wherein are now located the several corporations which shall have become united to the corporation hereby created in the manner aforesaid; and said board of commissioners, before determining such location, shall examine said localities and give reasonable hearing to parties interested, and shall take into consideration the past history, the present condition and future prospects of said existing corporations, as well as the local advantages of each of said localities for carrying out the purposes of this act.

SEC. 7. If all, or any, of the existing corporations aforesaid, shall become united with the corporation hereby created, in the manner aforesaid, in such case the corporation hereby created shall at all times hereafter be entitled to receive from this State, semi-annually, the income arising from interest upon any fund derived from the sale of any of the scrip for public lands granted to this State under the Act of Congress approved July 2, 1862, or derived from the sale of any lands located by

authority of this State by virtue of said scrip, and also to receive semi-annually, as aforesaid, the net proceeds of the rent of any such land which may hereafter be leased by this State, to be used for the special purposes, and upon the special conditions mentioned in this act.

SEC. 8. The corporation hereby created shall at all times maintain a regular course of instruction, which shall conform to the requirements of said Act of Congress, or if at any time they shall deem it expedient, they may establish a separate department, to be called "The Scientific Department," wherein shall be taught a regular course of instruction, which shall conform to the said requirements of said Act of Congress. *Provided*, if they shall establish such separate department they shall, so long as they continue the same, devote the interest or income which they shall receive from this State, arising out of the avails of said scrip or public lands, as aforesaid, wholly and exclusively to the maintenance in such department of such course of instruction as shall carry out the intent of said Act of Congress, in the manner specially prescribed in the fourth section of said act.

SEC. 9. Said corporation hereby created shall annually make and distribute the reports required by the fourth paragraph of section fifth of said Act of Congress.

SEC. 10. No portion of said interest or income mentioned in section seven of this act, shall be paid over to said corporation until said corporation shall contract with this State, by its contract in writing, in such form as the Governor shall approve, to fulfil and perform all the duties and obligations imposed upon it by this act.

SEC. 11. The Governor, Lieutenant Governor, the Judges of the Supreme Court, and the Secretary of the Board of Education, shall constitute a board of visitors, *ex officio*, whose duty it shall be to visit the said Vermont State University and Associate Colleges, in each year, and make report annually thereon to the Legislature.

SEC. 12. If neither of the existing corporations mentioned in this act shall on or before the said first day of November next, become united and incorporate with the corporation hereby created, in the manner provided for in this act, then this act shall be void, and the corporation hereby created shall cease to exist.

SEC. 13. This act shall be under the control of all future Legislatures.

SEC. 14. This act shall take effect from its passage.

Approved November 11, 1863.

It is undoubtedly true, however paradoxical it may seem to a superficial observer, that, in the present stage of our educational progress, no movement could more directly and more powerfully conduce to the present and prospective improvement of the common schools, than a successful effort to add to the resources and power of our colleges, and to spread their influence more widely among our people by increasing the number of those who attend upon them.

The prosperity of our common schools depends mainly, in a general sense, upon the prevalent appreciation of their importance that is entertained by the people; and secondarily upon the character of the teachers to whose care they are intrusted. The population of our state, with a well deserved reputation for general intelligence, comprises a comparatively small proportion of men of collegiate culture, and in the main, is indebted to the common schools for such educational advantages as they have possessed, to a greater degree than in many other states. The whole number of graduates from the two colleges at Burlington and Middlebury from the time of their establishment up to and including the year 1841, was less than eleven hundred.

If called upon to designate the class whose interest in common schools should exceed that of any other class, and whose readiness in every practicable way to enlarge their scope and increase their power should be strongly marked, we should naturally say, it would be that class which, by circumstances precluded from participation in the advantages of other and higher institutions, has been compelled to rely exclusively upon the common schools for their own intellectual development. And it is true that there can be found in the State no more warm and earnest friends of common schools than many individuals, whose early deprivation of educational privileges has, through the embarrassments and mortification resulting therefrom, produced an intense appreciation of the benefits of thorough elementary culture. Such men prize good schools, because they never enjoyed them.

But it is also true that many of the obstacles in the way of school improvements are placed there by men who have never attended any other than common schools, and none more persistently than they, object to their removal.

But, from the earliest movement in our state for the benefit of the common school to the present time, a very large proportion of the warmest, firmest and wisest friends of the common schools, have come from the graduates of colleges, and the professional men who have participated in the benefit of academic and collegiate culture. No class of men whatever have performed more, or more valuable service in the cause of popular education in Vermont than the clergymen of all denominations, whether officially connected with the schools as superintendents, or as members of the Legislature. They have always been ready both with word and deed, to stand up for the schools and for their improvement, even when they seemed to stand almost alone, in those dark days now gone, as we hope, never to return. It may be stated generally, that in every community, the interest in the public schools will be in due proportion to the degree of moral and mental culture by which such community is characterized.

A kind of partizan and prejudiced partiality for common schools as distinguished from all other schools and seminaries, because, as it is said, they are the "people's colleges," is often discernible in men of narrow scope and insignificent culture; but a right and thorough appreciation of the true power and importance of an adequate provision for the thorough elementary training of all the children of a republican commonwealth, as essential to political and social elevation and prosperity, is seldom entertained except by minds that are trained to habits of vigorous thought either by the discipline of educational institutions, or by the equally forcible discipline of life.

It is thus, by the continued training of individual minds, which inspired with higher and wider views of the value of better culture, return to, and contribute to leaven the great mass of community, that gradually new and more liberal views over-ride and crowd back mean and narrow

notions, and thus promote and foster the rise and growth of every good and worthy object, that the Academies and Colleges by imperceptible degrees reform and elevate the public mind and prepare it for work.

And wherever the public sentiment has thus, or by any other means, been liberalized and enlightened, there the public schools immediately receive the benefit of the change, in a general disposition to increase and improve the means given them with which to perform their work. Better houses, better teachers, more punctual attendance, and an increased general and particular interest, add much to their power.

The effect of the higher institutions upon the public schools is also apparent in the change wrought by them, both directly and indirectly, in the character of the instruction given in the schools. Nearly every one of the existing Union and Graded Public Schools in the State, at the present time, has for its teacher a graduate of one of the New England Colleges. And the same is true of the Academies. The scope, the spirit and the power of the instruction given in all these schools will, of necessity, be regulated by the character of the training received by their teachers at the Colleges, from which the greater portion come. But, by far the larger portion of our common schools are taught by the graduates or students of the Colleges, Academies, and graded schools. If then the character of the instruction given at the higher institutions is of a weak, or superficial description, it is felt at once in the common schools. But if the Collegiate training is such as to enlarge and elevate aims and purposes, clarify and purify the views and give strength and resolution to the efforts of those who attend them; then, through the teachers of the higher schools primarily, and through the pupils of the higher schools acting as teachers of the common schools, the influence of the higher seminaries is constantly and surely manifested.

Indeed it is nothing less than idle to treat the special interests of any particular grade of educational institutions as though they were, or could be, separated entirely from the interests of all other grades. Such is the mutual relation, the intimate connection and inevitable interdependence between the higher, intermediate and lower schools and seminaries, that they cannot be separated the one from the other. They all form together parts of one whole, are all together the different members of one complete body, which is the educational system of the State. Any injury to either member is inevitably injurious to each other and to the whole; and necessarily sympathizing with each other, whatever of power is added to one is felt by all; and if you benefit either grade of seminaries, it cannot if it would selfishly retain such benefit for its own peculiar use, but must needs share with all the rest and so contribute to the general good. These things being so, it follows that even if a man wished to confine his efforts at improvement to the common schools exclusively, he could not do it, for the simple reason that any improvement of the common school would immediately affect all the higher seminaries. And so also, it would often happen that the promotion of the prosperity of the

Colleges and higher Schools would be the most speedy and direct means of favorably affecting the common schools.

This is particularly the case at the present time when, throughout the State, there is a growing disposition to multiply the number of graded schools, for whose teachers we must in the main rely upon the Colleges.

To every true friend of education then, the friends of common schools particularly, as well as the especial friends of the higher institutions, the welfare and prosperity of our Colleges must be a matter of great interest, and should engage the attention and secure the aid of all who desire the rapid and certain mental and moral advancement of society.

In what way, and by what means can we promote the permanent growth and prosperity of our Vermont Colleges? is a question that addresses itself to every thoughtful citizen.

Colleges depend generally upon public endowment, private benefactions, and fees arising from the attendance of pupils; and will receive benefit from any measure which strengthens these main sources of supply, while their prospects will be injured by anything which by restricting or obstructing these channels shall diminish the effect that they may produce.

We have in Vermont no less than three collegiate institutions, all of which have accomplished much good work, but under long continued and vexatious embarrassments from a want of pecuniary means that have been surmounted through the indomitable persistence and self-abnegation of the literary men connected with them. And all of these Colleges are now, as they have many times before been, asking pecuniary assistance from the liberality of friends of education.

Under these circumstances, the adoption of some method to relieve the pecuniary necessities of all of these Colleges is a matter of importance.

Any scheme of relief, in order to be at all hopeful, must tend to affect favorably all the sources of supply that have been mentioned; it must increase the probabilities of state endowment, of individual assistance, and the attendance of pupils. Will not a consolidation of these different institutions accomplish this work?

And in discussing this question, particular reference will be had to the Colleges at Burlington and Middlebury, whose similarity of character —while in this respect both differ from the Norwich University—adds both to the desirability and feasibility of effecting such a juncture as has been suggested. The reasoning applied to the two Colleges named, applies with equal force in many respects to Norwich University; but the powerful impulse given by the present war to military education, has already given an unusual prosperity to Norwich University, and the certainty of a continued demand for military training promises to that institution a degree of success which cannot be expected to attend either of the colleges at Burlington or Middlebury. And the assertion made by

her friends of her ability to take care of herself is likely to be fully verified in the future. The military training of young men will never again be neglected in any of the free States.

First as to the effect of a Union of the Colleges at Burlington and Middlebury, upon the probability of additional endowment by the State.

The original endowment by the State of 29,000 acres of land for the benefit of the University of Vermont, which then was the "One University" contemplated in the constitutional clause, was a noble and generous donation for the times, and exceedingly creditable to the early fathers of the State. But an examination of the history of these two Colleges shows that, while education has been a frequent topic of legislation, this first gift by the State is the only one of any consequence that has ever been granted by the Legislature to either of the higher institutions. This fact, unexplained by circumstances, seems almost inexplicable when considered with reference to the known interest of the people in educational improvement, as often manifested by the Legislature in other directions.

From Mr. Thompson's account of the origin of Middlebury College, it appears that these two Colleges went into actual operation at about the same time; that a neglect for several years on the part of the University of Vermont, to avail itself of the State endowment, was the primary cause of the subsequent effort to establish a College at Middlebury, and divert to the support of the new college at Middlebury the state grant made for the college at Burlington, which seemed likely to lapse for want of actual improvement. The movement in favor of Middlebury college, when fairly considered, seems indeed both a natural and laudable one.—And to unprejudiced minds it would appear strange if the neglect of the friends of the University, after having successfully impressed the general mind with the necessity of a University, and after having obtained a grant of lands for that purpose, to proceed and make actual use of such grant, had not created alarm and uneasiness in the minds of the friends of education in other parts of the State. That such alarm existed, and really led to the attempt to divert to a college at Middlebury a fund that seemed likely to be otherwise in abeyance for an indefinite period, or lost entirely, is both natural and probable. And hence, from the authentic history of the whole matter, it seems not only possible, but exceedingly probable, that the effort to establish a college at Middlebury originated in the same love of sound learning and anxiety to promote it, which prompted the petition to establish and locate at Burlington the University of Vermont. So far, then, there is no ground for the imputation to the friends of either institution of any local prejudice or partizanship, to any greater extent than seems inseparable from all human management of all human affairs.

The petition for the incorporation of Middlebury college and the diversion to its benefit of the state endowment, was only partially successful. The charter asked for was granted, but the diversion of the whole or any portion of the fund was denied. To the observer at the present

time such disposition seems to have been most unfortunate. The presentation of the petition for another institution seems to have stimulated the friends of the University to new energy, and they, looking upon the new institution as an effort to supplant and weaken the University, could scarcely be expected to entertain very cordial wishes for its success. And the grant of a charter with a refusal to make any endowment whatever, threw the whole success of Middlebury upon the results of private benevolence, and must necessarily have stirred a strong spirit of rivalry among the friends of Middlebury. Certain it is, that from their very beginning, these two colleges, similar in character, and both excellent institutions, have proceeded in parallel courses; from their very similarity, and from their vicinity to each other, forced into the position of rivals contending for pre-eminence. It is no wonder that there should have been a marked separation of interests between them; the wonder really is that there should have been so little of hostility manifested.

The early legislative recognition of the value of a State University with the generous grant of land made in its favor, together with the known interest of the people in educational matters, indicate a readiness to make additional grants from the State from to time as they may have been needed. And there cannot be much doubt that under ordinary circumstances, such grants would have been made. But the very co-existence of two similar and co-ordinate institutions practically interposed an insuperable obstacle to such benefaction.

It was patent to observation that a single institution could easily perform all the work that in fact ever was performed by the two; and the aggregate attendance upon both was much less than the ordinary attendance upon many single institutions in our own country. Under these circumstances the support of two separate colleges seemed to many to be a mere waste of means, and so there has always been a legislative indisposition to make a grant to one, without similarly endowing the other, or to make any grant to both when no necessity for two colleges could be perceived. Then again, in every Legislature there have been warm friends of both colleges, and while there was no hope that any endowment of any significance would at any time be made to both institutions at the same time, it was hardly within the bounds of reasonable expectation that the friends of either college would vote to make a state benefaction to the other, with no hope of receiving the benefit of a similar one for their own college.

Such, in fact, has been the result. Since the original grant of land to the University, nothing of importance has been bestowed by the State upon either of the existing colleges; but they have been sustained by the generosity of individuals. During all this time warm friends of both colleges have been members of the Legislature, and the amount of individual contribution, particularly to the college at Middlebury, has been large, and very creditable to the donors, while it has demonstrated the general interest in the cause of collegiate education. In view of these

proofs of individual and general interest, it is a fair and forcible inference, that the persistent refusal of the State to grant assistance to any of the existing colleges is attributable in the first place, to a prevalent sentiment which is equivalent to a practical disapproval of the co-existence of two colleges for the accomplishment of work for which either one is entirely competent; and secondly, to the diversity of opinions and interests growing out of such co-existence and represented in the Legislature by the friends and partizans of both institutions.

As has been stated, individual benefaction forms the second great source of supply for the support of all collegiate institutions. And the supply from this source has, beyond a doubt, been seriously diminished by the division of collegiate interests resulting necessarily from the co-existence of two similar institutions. The fact that Middlebury college, without any assistance from the State whatever, and relying entirely for its endowment upon individual benefactions, should have sustained itself as it has for so many years in the immediate vicinity of a University heavily endowed by the State, so as even under these disadvantages to have graduated a much larger number than the State University, itself is evidence in the highest degree favorable to the character of Middlebury college and of its zealous and munificent friends. But still it is a well known fact that individuals professing and no doubt really feeling a warm interest in the advancement of mental and moral culture, have often asserted a willingness to contribute a portion of their means if they could see a reasonable prospect of any permanent benefit to result therefrom, asserting a belief that any contribution to the funds of either would only avail for a short period, and would inevitably soon be absorbed in the payment of interest and debts, because, as was often said, two colleges cannot be expected to thrive where the attendance upon one, if it were patronized by the whole State, would not be large.

Another class have often declined to give to either, because, as they have said, having no particular preference for one over the other, and unable to give to both, they are disinclined by giving to either to make a discrimination between the two similar and equally excellent institutions.

And lastly, the existence of two similar colleges in one small State, has operated unfavorably upon the attendance of students even from our own State. The establishment and support of two colleges for the performance of work that could as well be done in a single one, necessarily, in the provision of two bodies of instructors where one would be sufficient, more than doubles the necessary expense of the education given to the graduates of both. As a matter of course, then, neither of such colleges can have the means to furnish in the way of libraries, apparatus, equip-

ments and facilities of all kinds, or in opportunities for the acquisition of branches other than those commonly pursued, the same attractions that can be offered to young men in other colleges, and so is lost the attendance of many young men from our own State.

Again the very division of an aggregate attendance between two colleges, so diminishes the size of the different classes, that many young men of high spirit and ambition, who can see no particular honor in leading a class of a score or half a score, are attracted elsewhere, by the very fact that there they enter large classes of ambitious men, and there can find the excitement and stimulus to exertion which they desire and need. The average number of the classes graduating from the University of Vermont at Burlington in the first thirty eight years of its existence was 8 10-38, and the aggregate number of alumni during the same period was 314.—The average number of the graduates from Middlebury college for the first forty years was 19 5-8, and the aggregate graduations for the same time was 785. Young men desiring collegiate culture often manifest a reluctance to seek it where classes are thus small; and hence it is not at all uncommon to find young men from the vicinity of both our colleges, entering the colleges of other States. In 1862, the aggregate attendance upon our own, as compared with others of the eastern colleges, will show the operation of this influence. The University of Vermont had an aggregate attendance of 60; Middlebury college, 92; Dartmouth, 339; Harvard, 833; Williams 212; Amherst, 235; Yale, 599; Brown University, 214; University of New York, 508; Free Academy New York City, 647; and Union College, 352.

The attendance of young men from Vermont upon these colleges, has always been large, particularly upon Dartmouth, Amherst, Williams and Union; but the accurate statistics upon this subject are not at hand. It is considered safe to say that probably the attendance of Vermont men upon colleges outside of the State, has for many years been at least as large as the attendance of Vermonters at both the colleges of the State.

The men who thus prefer to our own the colleges of other States, do not impute any want of character or faithfulness to the Vermont colleges; but it is said, "they are small concerns." "If we had one more college they would all die," and that "it is small business to join a college class of ten or fifteen," &c., &c.

The patent remedy for all the evils enumerated, presents itself readily to the mind of every unbiassed man, who is more a friend of sound learning than a partizan of any particular college. And that remedy is the junction or consolidation of these colleges, if it can be effected.

If such a consolidation can be accomplished the resulting State University would be immediately relieved from the embarrassments to which reference has been made. The friends of each of the separate colleges would became joint friends of the consolidated college. The present differences of opinion and diverging views and plans of the friends of higher culture would cease, and all such men would concur in co-operating for the advancement of the common cause. Acting in accord, their influence would, whenever it was necessary, be felt upon the Legislature, and such state endowment as might be necessary to the full development of the state educational system, would be granted.

There would be no longer any diversity of collegiate interests, and the streams of individual benefaction, no longer obstructed by hesitation between the comparative deserts and necessities of rival institutions, would begin to flow.

The one University concentrating upon itself the interest of every lover of sound learning in the State, and strengthened by both state and private endowment, would be provided with all the equipments and conveniences that are necessary; would secure the services of all necessary teachers to become attractive to the young men of our own state at least; it would draw to its halls many who seek instruction in other states; and thus having a fair promise of state and private beneficence and a reasonably large attendance of pupils, would have secured command of the three main sources of collegiate prosperity.

Although, on account of recent legislation, the question of a collegiate union presents itself in a new aspect; the question itself is by no means a novel one. For many years many of our best men have given to the matter much and thoughtful consideration, and have not hesitated to express both a strong desire that the two colleges should become one, and a conviction of the practicability of effecting such a union.

The consummation of such an union has also more than once been the subject of negotiation between the constituted authorities of the two colleges, and there is cause to fear that such consummation has been prevented, less by a conviction that the obstacles in the way were really insuperable, than by a preference of local and particular interests over the general interests of Education.

In the year 1847, a correspondence took place between the President and Fellows of Middlebury college and the President and executive committee of the University of Vermont. This correspondence was laid before the corporation of the University and by them referred to a very able committee, consisting of Gov. Eaton, Charles Paine, Timothy Follett and George P. Marsh. In their report this committee recommended that a special committee be appointed to confer with a similar committee from Middlebury college and make a joint report of their doings to the two Boards, or a special report to this corporation. And the committee

"do not advise that any other instructions or authority be given to the committee of conference than that they shall endeavor to agree with the committee of the Board of Middlebury College in recommending to the two Boards some plan whereby the important object of uniting these seminaries of learning may be secured, and all private interests and public ends connected with either (so far as may be) saved."

The very great importance attached by these men to the movement contemplated is very evident from their language above, and also from the resolutions which the corporation of the U. V. M., upon the recommendation of the above committee, adopted. The resolutions were as follows:

*Whereas*, judicious persons have long entertained the opinion that the cause of good learning in Vermont would be promoted by an union between this University and Middlebury College; and

*Whereas*, the existence of two literary seminaries of the highest class within so short a distance of each other hath been found in practice to be productive of serious embarrassment in the prosecution and advancement of that great cause; and

*Whereas*, many good and discreet friends, patrons of both institutions, have professed a belief that such union is not only highly desirable in itself, but that it is now practicable, and

*Whereas*, the President and Fellows of Middlebury College, have at the suggestion of the Executive Committee of this corporation, appointed a committee of conference on their part to take into consideration the subject aforesaid; therefore,

*Resolved*, That this Corporation doth heartily and fully concur in the opinion that the interests of education and the cause of knowledge would be greatly promoted by an union of the two seminaries in question, and that an earnest effort ought to be made to accomplish the same.

*Resolved*, farther, That a Committee of three members of this corporation be appointed to confer with the Committee already appointed by the President and Fellows of Middlebury College, and to endeavor to agree with said last mentioned committee upon a plan of union of the two seminaries, to be recommended to the respective Boards; and if the committee shall fail to agree, that said committee of this corporation shall make report setting forth whether such failure to agree arose from obstacles legally insuperable, or from differences of opinion touching the terms and conditions of the proposed union.

The Rev. John Wheeler, Rev. Worthington Smith and Hon. Jacob Collamer were appointed upon this committee, and on the 9th September 1847, reported a draft of a charter, upon which the joint committee of conference had agreed.

The following is the charter reported:

*An act to unite the Institutions of the University of Vermont and Middlebury College.*

*Whereas*, the Corporation of the University of Vermont and the President and Fellows of Middlebury College, desirous of so modifying the acts creating said corporations as to form a union thereof for sustaining one institution of learning in this State, instead of the two, now by them separately sustained, and consolidating them into one; to effect that purpose have each by vote requested the passage of a law in the words and figures here set forth. And whereas learning and morality will be promoted by such a union, therefore

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont as follows:

SEC. 1. The two corporations known by the names of the University of Vermont, and the President and Fellows of Middlebury College, are hereby consolidated and united into one corporation for the support of one, and but one institution of learning, or College, to be called the University of Vermont.

SEC. 2. The individuals composing the corporation of the University of Vermont, and the President and Fellows of Middlebury College (not exceeding twelve, besides the ex-officio members from each board) and their associates and successors, shall at all times hereafter be the trustees of said University of Vermont, hereby provided, and be a body politic and corporate to be known by the name and style of the corporation of the University of Vermont, and of this corporation the Governor of this State and the Speaker of the House of Representatives for the time being, together with the President of said College when elected, shall be *ex officio* members, and this body shall from and after its first meeting be considered and regarded as a modification, continuation and consolidation in a united form of the said two corporations; and all the property real and personal (including interest and estates in the public lands of the State) and all funds, trusts, contracts and demands in any way held by or belonging to either of said corporations shall be retained by, belong to and be under the entire possession and control of the said corporation of the University of Vermont hereby created; and all actions and suits necessary to recover, sustain and enforce the same, may be brought in that name in all cases where the same can be now brought by either of said corporations as now existing in its own name, and the said corporation of the University of Vermont hereby created, shall be responsible for all the debts, dues and demands now existing against either of said corporations hereby united and be subject to all the duties and trusts now resting on them respectively.

*Provided*, nevertheless, that all voluntary subscriptions, contracts and conveyances, which have been made to either of said corporations within two years past, shall be inoperative and void, except those made to the corporation of the College, situated in the place which the Commissioners hereinafter appointed shall designate as the permanent location of the College. [*Not agreed on.*)

SEC. 3. The said corporation of the University of Vermont hereby created shall have full power to take by gift, grant, purchase or devise, any estate, real or personal for the use of said College or Institution of learning, but shall not hold at any one time a greater quantity of land within this State than seventy thousand acres, and they may from time to time elect, appoint, support and remove officers and servants as they find necessary to direct the studies in said institution; may establish professorships and provide for their support, may make all rules, regulations and by-laws necessary for their own proceedings and the orderly government of said Institution, (provided the said rules, regulations and by-laws shall not be repugnant to the constitution or laws of this State, nor give preference to any one christian sect or denomination over another.) May grant and confer all such degrees, literary titles, honors and distinctions as other colleges and universities have been accustomed to or may of right grant and confer, and shall have all the rights and powers ordinarily incident to a corporation aggregate, or which shall be found necessary for the government and welfare of such an Institution. And all the scholars and members and the graduates both of the University of Vermont and Middlebury College, shall be entitled to the same rank, class and privileges in the college or institution hereby provided for, as they now have or hold in either of these institutions.

SEC. 4. The first meeting of said corporation of the University of Vermont hereby created shall be held at such time as the commissioners hereinafter appointed shall designate, when the trustees of said University shall proceed to the performance of the duties of their appointment, and from which time their powers under this act shall take effect. No person shall be elected a member of said corporation until the

number shall have been reduced by resignations, death or otherwise below fifteen, besides the *ex officio* members, which number shall not afterwards be exceeded. A majority of the existing members shall be necessary to constitute a quorum except for the purpose of adjournment; and all vacancies shall be filled by elections made by ballot by said corporation at a regular or stated meeting.

SEC. 5. The estate of the said corporation of the University of Vermont hereby created, both real and personal, shall be free and exempt forever from taxes to the full amount of three hundred and thirty-three thousand dollars; and the persons, families and estate (in the town where said institution is situated) of the President and Professors, and the tutors, students, graduates and servants thereof, shall be entitled to the same exemption of taxes and duties as they now are at the University of Vermont or Middlebury College.

SEC. 6. Thomas J. Williams of Hartford (who shall be chairman) and William L. Ellsworth, both of Hartford, Connecticut; Heman Humphrey of Pittsfield: Samuel Hubbard of Boston and John Codman of Dorchester, all of Massachusetts, are hereby constituted a board of commissioners with power to designate and determine on or before the 1st day of January A. D. 1848, whether said Institution of learning or College herein provided for shall be situated at Burlington in the County of Chittenden or Middlebury in the County of Addison; and in case any of them fail to serve, Joel Parker of Keene, New Hampshire, in the first place, and James W. Alexander of the City of New York in the next place shall be substituted in lieu of the person or persons so failing to serve, four of said commissions shall form a quorum the award of a majority of whom shall be final and conclusive; provided that unless said award is made on or before the 1st January 1848, this act shall become inoperative and void.

The report of the committee of conference was accepted and the proposed charter was referred to a special committee consisting of Geo. P. Marsh, Charles Adams and Samuel Prentiss, who were requested to examine and report to a future meeting as to the legal power and right of the Corporation to accept said charter.

In October 1847, this last committee made and submitted the following report.

The committee to whom was referred the report of the Committee appointed by this Board to confer with the committee appointed by the President and Fellows of Middlebury College on the subject of a union of the two institutions, and the draft of an act of incorporation for that purpose, made the following report, to wit:

*To the Corporation of the University of Vermont:*

The committee to whom was referred the draft of a proposed act for the Union of this University with Middlebury College have examined the subject and endeavored to give to it all the consideration that its importance seems to demand.

The draft virtually proposes that the trustees of this University in conjunction with the Trustees of Middlebury College respectively surrender their charters; that they ask the State to merge the two institutions in one institution, and that they confer power upon certain commissioners to decide where the new institution shall be located. The first impression arising from the examination of the act is the singularity of the mode adopted for the location of the new institution. If the proposed act is to be considered as emanating from the State it would seem to be incongruous, that the Legislature should not determine the site of the new institution for themselves. But the more appropriate view is to regard the commissioners as charged with the duty of deciding an issue formed by the two institutions, and that in the discharge of this duty the commissioners are to be considered as arbitrators between

the two institutions. Stripped of legislative interference the trustees of the two institutions agree to merge their respective institutions in *one* and submit the question to an arbitration as to the location of such new institution. We doubt whether the State will be willing to submit any great interest of theirs to an arbitration. It certainly will not comport with the dignity of a state that any great question in which they have an interest should be committed to an arbitration. There is something in the idea of committing a grave subject to arbitration that cannot be contemplated without pain. The trustees of each institution must be as sensible of the importance of maintaining a high and useful public institution as any arbitrators can be; and are far better qualified to decide upon the proper location of it. Instead then of creating an arbitration, if any thing is to be done, it would seem to be more appropriate that it should be done directly by the trustees.

Your committee are of opinion that one literary institution well endowed and properly conducted will be sufficient to meet the wants of the State, and would do more to advance the cause of sound learning and true religion than the same amount of labor and means divided between two. They regret that more than one such institution has been established, and hope that the time is not far distant when the energies of the whole State may be concentrated upon one alike honorable to its character and beneficial to those who shall resort to it for instruction. Your committee are, however, fearful that the proposed act will involve us in difficulty, and that so much of danger may result therefrom to this corporation that they cannot advise its adoption. The proposed act delegates power to the commissioners to determine the site of the new institution and in the exercise of this power the commissioners are not restricted to this town where the University was established by the State, but may in their discretion locate it elsewhere. In considering the act it is proper to contemplate as about to be done that which the commissioners have power to do, and the question will then be whether it is expedient or right for this corporation to become parties to an act which puts an end to the existence of the institution as now established.

The corporation are aware that we are in debt; that we owe large sums of money—that a portion of our debt has been secured by a mortgage upon the property of the University—and that for other portions some of the friends of this institution stand as indorsers. It gives us pleasure to know that to provide means of paying these debts and for other purposes a large subscription of fifty thousand dollars has been raised. It is true that there are no limitations in this subscription in terms confining it to this University as now located, but it must be apparent that the subscribers never contemplated that their subscriptions were to be diverted to any other institution, not even to this institution in any other place. Whether we should have the power to retain and collect this subscription after the removal of the college to another place is not very material to enquire, inasmuch as we consider it would be highly dishonorable to attempt it, and we cannot for a moment suppose that the corporation would attempt it. The subscription being abandoned, we should be left with limited means of paying the just debts of the institution, and subject ourselves to the severest censures of those who have generously lent their names as our sureties, and put in jeopardy the property of the institution now under mortgage. Such a state of things ought not unnecessarily to be incurred, and we cannot imagine any object sought to be attained by it that would justify such wanton trifling with the character and property of this institution. It is true, the act provides that the new institution shall assume the debts of the two, and of course would be responsible to the creditors of this University for the amount of their claims; but its ability to meet promptly the payment of them may be problematical, and whether able or not we could not stand justified for a voluntary abandonment of a more certain means of payment. There are likewise other reasons growing out of the character of the institution and the nature of the trusts confided to us, rendering it at least doubtful whether we have moral right to put an end to the institution, and thus defeat the asparent object of the State in its establishment. The intention of the Legislature in founding and endowing this University cannot be mistaken. Deeply impressed

with the importance of intellectual and religious cultivation, and that the efficiency of common schools must be greatly dependent on higher institutions, they aimed to establish a great public institution, and with the aid of philanthropic individuals to give facilities for an ample course of instruction, so that all the youth of the State, even of the most limited means, might have the benefit of a thorough course of instruction. For this purpose, at an early period of our history the Legislature set apart a portion of the public property of the State, and by the creation of this corporation have invested it with the duty of administering its beneficence. Prompted by the liberality of the State public spirited individuals have made large donations and thereby greatly increased the amount of this benefice, and in conjunction with the State have raised an ample fund and devoted it to a most sacred purpose, that of educating the State.

The trustees of this institution must be regarded as administrators of a public charity to be controlled and directed for great public purposes, and answerable to the State, and the patrons of the institution, for a right discharge of the trust.

Contemporaneously with the creation of the fund the Legislature by a public act located the University at this place, and the donations of individuals in aid of the University have been made at least upon the implied pledge that the University was to remain as located. In execution of the purpose for which the fund was raised large sums have been expended in the erection of public buildings, and these sums have from time to time been increased until the amount has swelled to thousands, which by a removal of the University would be rendered of little or no value.

The right of surrendering powers vested in this corporation by a public act, cannot be made to depend on the object to be attained by such surrender. If the corporation have the right of surrendering their charter in any given case they must have the same right in all cases, and the expediency only of the exercise of such right can be controlled by circumstances. If the charter can be surrendered for the attainment of an eminently great object it may be surrendered in every case and thus involve the absurd proposition that a corporation created to sustain and protect a public institution have in their discretion the moral right of totally annihilating that institution. Your committee are unwilling to adopt a proposition that leads to such consequences, and believe that before it shall receive the sanction of this Board it should be examined with great care.

It may be said that by the proposed act we surrender to the State the powers they have delegated, and that by such surrender we do not abandon our trusts.—There may be something specious in this idea, but we apprehend it is entirely unsound. Abandonment will arise in every case when there is a refusal longer to discharge the duty, and a surrender to the State, uncalled for by the State, is as complete an abandonment of our trusts as a surrender to any other body or a direct refusal longer to discharge the duties of the trust. Your committee consider it is for the State to determine how many institutions they will patronize and where they shall be located, and it will be in time for us to consider the duty of giving up our charter when thereto required by the State ; but we cannot consent to become volunteers in the act of annihilating the institution committed to us as its patrons and guardians.

How far an institution founded by private munificence, such as Middlebury College is understood to be, may be under the control of the trustees of the institution, and how far they may be justified in changing the location of it for the better attainment of the object, is not a question for us to determine. It is quite apparent that the two institutions do not rest on the same foundation, and that the reasoning applicable to the one may not apply in the same force to the other.

In arriving at the conclusion that we ought not to adopt the plan of union as proposed by the act, we are far from wishing it to be inferred that we are opposed to the subject of union, or that we believe the matter wholly impracticable. It would be a most glorious achievement if the two institutions could be united ; but as at present advised we cannot consent to put the great interests of this institution in jeopardy by giving unlimited power to an arbitration. This institution, as before said, is a public institution, founded by the State, having its origin almost coeval with

the State, is identified with its history, and has contributed no small share in promoting the great objects of the State. In its career this institution has been often subjected to grave and sore calamities, but has always risen superior to them, and now stands before the literary world as a powerful aid and coadjutor in the public work of educating a state and elevating the condition of its youth by the cultivation and enhancement of their intellectual and moral powers. Its origin, its career, its history, its character and evident condition, forbid the idea that we shall extinguish its light even in the hope of creating one more bright and glorious. We hope that the view which on full consideration we have taken of the subject will not be the means of giving dissatisfaction in any quarter. We have endeavored above all things to come to a just and right understanding of our duty, and to discharge that duty in the most unexceptionable manner."

Which report having been read and considered, was accepted, and the following preamble and resolutions were introduced, read and adopted, to wit :

*Whereas*, the report of the committee of conference contemplates the merging of the University in a new institution with a new charter and Board of Trustees, and a transfer to that institution of whatever means the University has to depend on to discharge its pecuniary obligations :

*Whereas*, by the bill reported the location of the new institution is to be determined by a committee drawn from other States, but very imperfectly acquainted with our internal condition and relations, and especially with the feelings of our citizens, in regard to so important a matter:

*Whereas*, the late munificent subscription to the University is by the express terms of the bill rendered inoperative and void in case its present location is disturbed, and in the opinion of legal advisers must from the manifest terms in which it was made cease to be obligatory in law ; and

*Whereas*, it is a matter for serious apprehension whether the funds of the University, reduced by the forfeiture of the late subscription. and the great sacrifice of property which must unavoidably arise from a change of its present site, would be adequate to its existing heavy liabilities, and to save uninjured its creditors and sureties, therefore,

*Resolved*, That while the Board regard the existence of two colleges in the State, of kindred spirit and aim, as a hindrance to the cause of sound learning and occasioning a wasteful application of public charity, they nevertheless under existing circumstances feel constrained by a proper sense of fidelity to the public, and of their obligation to individuals, to decline the proposition for union in the form in which it now comes before them.

*Resolved*, That the Board do not adopt the project that has been submitted, and that the committee be discharged from further duties in the premises.

Thus ended a somewhat prolonged and vigorous effort to accomplish an object that by the admissions of all who participated in the effort, was conceded to be of great desirability and importance.

The doings of only one of the corporations interested are recited, because the records of the other are not accessible ; and because, so far as can be learned, the action of both corporations was similar. Both seem to have been sincere in making an effort to unite ; and both seem to have succumbed to the apparent difficulties discovered.

Time, that has elapsed since the failure of the attempt to unite, which has been alluded to, has wrought but little change in the circumstances of either of the two colleges. Some of the obstacles in the way of a union still remain as they then stood; but circumstances and recent legislation have obviated some of the difficulties that seemed at that time to be absolutely insurmountable.

By an act of Congress of the year 1862, a munificent appropriation of public lands was made for the encouragement of educational institutions for "the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life;" two years from the date of the approval of said act being given, within which the acceptance by the various states shall by legislative enactment be indicated; and five years from the date of the act are given, within which each State accepting the grant shall provide at least one college as described in the act.

The Legislature of 1862, by special enactment accepted said congressional grant on the part of Vermont; and in 1865, in pursuance of the pledge of the public faith implied in the acceptance of the grant the legislature passed the act "To incorporate the Vermont State University and Associate Colleges, &c.," which is hereinbefore quoted.

Thus a practical question of great and conceded importance presents itself again for careful consideration, and is to be discussed under the very different lights and in connection with surroundings and circumstances of a different complexion from those hitherto recognized. And it comes with a demand for consideration so urgent from the very change of circumstances, and made so imperative by the legislation quoted, that it must and will receive a decided and, to a great extent, a final disposition.

Can a union of the two colleges be consummated at the present time? is the phase of the general question which first presents itself.

That the accomplishment of such an union will be attended with very many and very serious difficulties, no sane man can deny. The difficulties in the way have perhaps never been more forcibly stated than by the committee whose report upon the expediency of accepting the previous charter has been herein embodied. It will be remembered that, in their report, the committee urged the rejection of the proposed charter, because they say, in effect, that it would be absurd and impertinent to ask the Legislature to delegate a portion of their own legitimate functions to a board of arbitrators, who at the same time should be empowered to change and dispose of certain vested rights and corresponding duties of two bodies corporate; and express strong doubts whether the State will ever adopt such a course. They likewise object on account of the just claims of creditors against the college which they represent, and doubt the power of the new institution to meet the aggregate pecuniary responsibilities of the two component colleges. They doubt the moral right of the college to surrender, uncalled for by the State, rights and trusts that came originally from the State.

Most of these objections, and they the most serious, being those based upon an apparent interference with legislative functions, are entirely done away by the recent act for the establishment of the Vermont State University and Associate Colleges. By that act all the various colleges of the State are expressly invited to become merged in a newly-created institution, the location of which is to be determined by commissioners therein named. And all doubt as to the capacity of the resulting University to discharge all the financial obligations of each and all the constituent colleges as fully as they could do it, is removed by the provision by which the resulting University is specifically made liable for all the legal debts of each of the uniting colleges, to an amount not exceeding the value of the property of each, which by the act is absorbed in the general fund. And if the junction of two or more institutions to form a single one stronger and more able to perform the same work, should be determined to be such a change of character as to involve a forfeiture of any funds arising from individual benefaction and granted upon terms and conditions either express or implied, still the proceeds from the land scrip, which by the act is added to the aggregate fund of the united colleges, would more than compensate for such loss.

So it appears that there are no insurmountable obstacles to the proposed junction; it can be effected and with little danger now of pecuniary loss.

Next in order it will be well to inquire if any attempt to effect the proposed union is likely to be made.

Distrust of the necessity, expediency and economy of the support of more than a single institution of the highest class is not by any means of recent origin. From the earliest history of the two institutions, strong doubts have pervaded the general mind of the State in reference to the co-existence of two colleges so similar in character, scope and excellence. And from time to time these doubts have found frequent and forcible expression through the friends of both colleges.

The language of the report of the committee hereinbefore quoted, where they say that "the cause of good learning in Vermont would be promoted by an union between this University and Middlebury College;" and that "the existence of two literary seminaries of the highest class within so short a distance of each other, hath been found in practice to be productive of serious embarrassment in the prosecution and advancement of that great cause;" and "that the interests of education and the cause of knowledge would be greatly promoted by an union of the two seminaries in question and that an earnest effort ought to be made to accomplish the same;" is only an apt expression of opinions and sentiments that for many years had generally prevailed.

This feeling has not diminished in intensity at all with the passage of time, but has rather increased both in power and definiteness, until it may be said that scarcely a single man of sense in the whole State, can be found to deny the desirability of a union of our colleges, if such union be practicable.

Upon the acceptance by the State of the congressional grant for the establishment of one or more agricultural colleges, a conviction that now, when the very acceptance of the grant must be considered a solemn pledge by the State to carry out in good faith the obligation thus assumed, was the time most auspicious for the consummation of the project of a collegiate union so long agitated, seemed to seize simultaneously upon many minds. Satisfactory evidence of the prevalence of such sentiments is given by the fact that no single measure that was before the Legislature at its last session attracted more general attention, or elicited more or more general discussion among members and others, than the bill for the establishment of the Vermont State University and Associate Colleges.

Eminent and well known friends of education, those officially connected with all the collegiate institutions, and others, participated with members in public discussion of this important matter; and not a single man could or did say that the union was not desirable. Difficulties of various kinds, some real and some imaginary, were called forth in solemn array, but not a voice was raised against the union itself. The enactment which followed the discussion was a simple expression of a conviction that was general it not universal, among those not personally interested in either of the existing colleges, that the union ought to be consummated and could be effected.

Such a general conviction, so well known to all interested, indicates a very strong probability that some action will result; that some plan by which the benefits of the congressional grant will be made available for the education of the State will be adopted. And this very strong probability is made almost a certainty by a variety of powerful and converging causes. The growing demand for such a modification of the course of studies adopted by the higher schools and colleges as shall give more attention to modern languages, the natural sciences, and the application of mathematics to practical pursuits, is one of these causes. The utter impossibility that the existing colleges, without a very large and very improbable accession of pecuniary strength, should, so long as they remain dissevered, even attempt such modification, is another cause. The value of the land scrip, which may be safely estimated at from $120,000 to $130,000, either as an addition to the funds of any particular college, or as the basis of a new institution, is another cause.

It may then safely be assumed that the recent legislation of the State will not fail of its end and become fruitless; but that in one way or another it will be made available.

If therefore, some scheme of operations in all probability is to be adopted, it may be considered very certain that a change is soon to be worked in our higher institutions of learning. It may, then, it *must* be, well for the friends of education to look over the field of possibilities and probabilities, that by one common effort an impulse may be given towards the adoption of that plan or scheme which, among all that may be adopted, promises the largest measure of good. Some plan involving

important changes will be adopted, either with or without the co-operation of those interested particularly in the existing colleges. What then may be done, and what ought to be done, are important topics of consideration.

Assuming then the probability of some action by which advantage will be taken of the recent legislation, that action will be governed by some one of the following alternate conditions.

Either all of the existing colleges will hold themselves aloof and refuse to become associated and merged in the new college; or one of the existing colleges will unite with the Agricultural College while all the others will refuse: or two or more of the colleges now in being will unite and become merged. It will be well to endeavor to ascertain the probable results of each of these differing and alternative combinations.

Suppose then in the first place, that all the present colleges refuse to combine either with any of the others, or with the newly created State University; what results may be expected? In such case it must of necessity happen, either that the whole matter will rest in abeyance in the hope that future legislation will be more satisfactory; or the recent legislation will be considered abortive and nothing be done under it, or the State University will organize under the law and proceed without the co-operation of any existing institution.

There is little probability that all action will be suspended, in the expectation that future legislation can be made satisfactory to the managers of institutions, who will not manifest the little interest that would be indicated by taking the very first step in giving their general acceptation of the legislation for the general good, with a fair prospect afterwards of securing any desirable and necessary modifications. In view of the universal conviction of the desirability of collegiate consolidation, and of the feasibility either by individual effort or by legislation of removing many of the difficulties in the way, an absolute refusal on the part of all the colleges would rather provoke than prevent immediate action; and would disincline the general mind to await the results of attempting by future legislation to meet the wishes of those who thus refuse. And the limitation of the time within which some provision must actually be made for the special education contemplated in the congressional grant, would have a strong tendency to prevent a longer suspense.

Neither does it seem probable that no action whatever will be taken under the recent enactment of our legislature. Year by year, for a number of years, the general interest in the educational system has steadily increased. More and more clearly has the necessity of a complete and well regulated as well as comprehensive state system, forced itself upon the minds of the whole people. And with equal pace the public attention has more and more been turned towards the higher grades of schools and seminaries, with a growing conviction that the multiplication of graded schools and the strengthening of all higher seminaries are to be main sources of improvement. Consolidation of the collegiate strength, is by the majority of the people thought to be the agency through which a

newer and stronger life is to be infused into the whole system; and it is commonly believed to be practicable. Many of the former obstructions having been swept away by legislation, it is now believed that could the influence of local partiality be removed, such consolidation could easily, and probably would, be effected.

Then again, the acceptation of the Congressional grant, made particularly for the purpose of securing special attention to the education of the young in certain special directions, is by the mass of our citizens regarded as a solemn and sacred pledge of the faith of the State to the faithful discharge of the obligations thus assumed. Thus the probability of an entire failure to make any attempt to profit by the present opportunity to effect changes that shall be improvements in the administration of our educational system, is exceedingly small.

What, then, are the probabilities in regard to the establishment of a State University under the law, in case no one of the existing colleges is disposed to accept of the terms proposed by the act?

If any of the higher institutions now in operation were to unite with the University established by the act, then such a modification of the course of study heretofore pursued in such institution might be made, as would conform to the requirements of the law of Congress; and by this union such an addition, from the proceeds of the land scrip, would be made to its financial strength, as would make possible the giving of instruction in "such branches of learning as are related to Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts," which should fulfil all the conditions, both express and implied, of the Act of Congress. But, unless by such junction, the benefit of the land scrip is first secured, the pecuniary condition of all our colleges is such as to preclude any one of them from making the necessary preparation for instruction that, if made, would entitle them to claim, on account of having adapted their character to the requirements of the Act of Congress, the benefit of the grant of lands within the period limited by law; and this is apparent to the great bulk of our people.—So that the neglect or refusal of all the existing colleges to unite with the proposed State University would, in the view of many, involve a complete failure to redeem the pledged faith of the State; and the establishment and support of a State Agricultural College, or University, as a separate and independent institution, would almost necessarily result.

Such probability, moreover, is increased by a perceptible change in the public sentiment of the State in regard to the desirability of higher culture and a more advanced standard of intelligence for all classes of men. While the appreciation of the necessity of a higher education for all who propose to engage in professional pursuits has not at all lessened in many years past, an impression has been rapidly growing that that necessity need not and should not be confined to professional men alone. It is true, indeed, that the old notion that men who are born to labor are born to that condition alone, and should not look elsewhere, still retains its hold on many minds: but still many more minds have been enfranchised from the slavishness of such an idea. In later times, year by year,

more and still more clearly, have the scope and opportunity of development that are offered by the agricultural, mechanical and scientific pursuits of life been perceived. The progress of a war more colossal in its proportions and more exacting in its requirements, than any that has ever preceded it, is forcibly illustrating this truth. The darkness of the shadow of this tremendous struggle has, from the first, been illuminated by the flashings of genius, that combining scientific knowledge and mechanical skill is vindicating its own power and majesty in view of the civilized world.

Whether it be in the struggle between a Monitor and a Merrimac, as terrific as it is novel and momentous, revolutionizing the entire system of naval warfare throughout the world in a few hours, or pouring for miles through the thick darkness its flood of light in whose brightness may be seen the flight of projectiles that belittle all previous conceptions of what science and art can accomplish; or whether lying concealed in the bayous of the Father of Waters, it calmly rests upon the result of mathematical calculation, and itself unseen and unsuspected, batters down the walls of a fortification entirely out of view and miles away; the actuality of the power resulting from the true union of science and art, far exceeding the dreams and hopes of even leading minds of the preceding generation, has made a most profound impression upon every thoughtful mind.

Agriculture, too, is pressing its claims in a manner that cannot be denied. It is lifting itself up from the grade of mere manual labor and ox-work. Geology, Chemistry, and the application of mechanical ingenuity, within the last quarter of a century, have changed entirely the character of farming. And agriculture now, offering a fair field for the unlimited application of intelligence and skill, and with an unceasing demand for still more and more of sound knowledge in every direction, whether judged by the nature and extent of its possible and practical requirements, or the opportunities it may be made to afford for intellectual development, may well claim to stand in dignity side by side with the learned professions.

From the nature of its labor, too, agricultural employment, rightly conducted, affords on the one hand a chance, if not a certainty, of a more robust physical health and strength, and on the other more of leisure time, upon which the craving demands of its ordinary business cannot encroach, than can be given by any other pursuit. The obligations of self-culture and improvement, rest with corresponding weight upon all engaged in tilling the soil; and not only is there no substantial reason why farmers should be inferior to professional men in intellectual culture and intelligence; but there are many and convincing reasons why, as a class, the farmers of Vermont should lead the State in general intelligence, sound judgment, and practical wisdom.

Such views of the possible and proper character of agricultural pursuits, have ceased to be considered strange or foolish, and have so fixed

themselves in the minds of multitudes of thinking men, that a very decided impression has generally obtained in favor of a modification of the management of the higher institutions of learning.

It is claimed that without in the least derogating from the conceded importance of the classics, a more decided recognition should be given in all of our Colleges to the necessity of instruction that directly prepares men for agricultural, mechanical and scientific pursuits. There is and there can be no doubt that multitudes of thoughtful men concur in this view.

The frequent repetition of learned and elaborate eulogies upon the super-eminent importance of classical culture, with the attending undue exaltation of the intellectual discipline resulting from a study of the dead languages, as incomparably more valuable than any that can come from the study of any and indeed of all other branches, has induced many to look with suspicion upon the manifest reluctance with which the higher institutions, yielding to the general demand, have slowly and hesitatingly consented to a gradual modification of their courses of study that extends a rather cold welcome to the practical sciences and modern languages. Such a course has created and fostered a conviction that the colleges are hostile to any due and proper appreciation of the practical sciences, which although it may not have any foundation in fact, has exerted a powerful effect to stimulate the desire for a change of the system of instruction.

When, then, mainly through the intelligent and persistent efforts of a distinguished representative of Vermont, the congressional grant of public lands for the support of Agricultural Colleges was obtained, and our State by legislation accepted the grant and proceeded to take measures to make it available, a profound sense of gratification was excited among the more intelligent men engaged in practical pursuits throughout the State.

Such legislation seemed to the farmers of the State a decided step forward in the work of elevating agricultural and other industrial pursuits, to the relative ranks that of right seemed properly to belong to them. It operated in satisfaction of a desire that had been gradually but rapidly growing more distinct and well-defined. It was legislation that, at first satisfactory to the dominant class of the State, is sure to meet with favor, increasing in due proportion to the effectiveness with which it accomplishes the object it had in view.

The higher and better education of men who are to engage in industrial occupations, has such intrinsic claims to attention and has become so favorite a purpose, that now when the means of accomplishing it are at hand, there is no probability that it will be given up. And, if no one of the existing colleges shall assent to the junction proposed, under the law, it may be considered certain, that the object of the law will be secured by the establishment of a State Agricultural College, as an independent institution, as soon as events shall have demonstrated the abortiveness in this directions of present legislation.

In that event, it becomes of interest to inquire what will be the probable character of the new college, what its prospects of success, and what its effect upon the colleges already established.

In the first place, the phraseology of the congressional act will itself determine the general character of the new institution.

Independent in relation to other institutions, with no diverting tendencies to cater to the special views or policy of other corporations, hampered with no entanglements, sacredly preserving such characteristics of other colleges as in the light of past experience and present knowledge shall vindicate their claims to selection, the new college can boldly and safely adapt itself to the felt wants of the present age. Declining to restrict itself to the preparation of men for professional life exclusively, it can without difficulty; and undoubtedly will, assume the character of an University in fact, where "without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics," it may give thorough instruction in "such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts," "and thus promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."

An institution assuming such a character will not be intrusted to the management of inferior men. It will be given in charge to the best of the scholarly, thoughtful, and at the same time energetic and practical men, of whom Vermont has her full share. And in the arrangement of its course of study and all other details, its guardians will neither allow it to become a mere "manual labor school" nor a mere theological seminary. Noble in its purpose, wide in its scope and far seeing in its views, it will span the whole field of human knowledge; reaching over from the dim seclusion of the cloister, dank with the dampness of the middle ages, to the din and glare of the workshop of to-day, it will tie itself to neither, but uniting both, and selecting from each, it will take its pathway in the sunshine of actual life at the present day.

Taught by the wisdom of the past it will bate no jot or tittle of the respect that justly belongs to classical culture, just that and no more will be given; while modern Languages, Chemistry, Botany, Scientific Agriculture, Mechanics, Surveying, Engineering, Military tactics, History, Literature, the Fine Arts, and Physical Culture, all will receive their deserved attention. In short, conforming to the requirements of the congressional grant, and fully carrying out in good faith the obligations assumed, it will become a State University.

And what will be the pecuniary prospects of the new college?

If compelled to stand alone, as must needs be if no other institution will unite, the new college will not be located in the vicinity of either of the existing colleges. In the present state of the public mind it will be sought for by many different localities in the State. In the expectation of a good degree of prosperity, which is not unreasonably entertained, it is safe to assume that more than one vicinity will readily offer

to provide all the land and buildings that will be needed for the successful inauguration of the new institution, free of cost; and with such an offer, the avails of the land scrip will place the University on at least as good a financial basis as belongs to any other college in the State.

The circumstances too, by which the new college will be surrounded, will strongly tend to give it command of the main sources of strength that have been cited.

*First.* Standing disconnected with any other college, and this on account of their refusal to unite with it, it will be deemed to represent in the main the educational interests of the industrial classes, and will seem to have incurred the opposition of other colleges on that account; and it will receive the more cordial and earnest support of all engaged in the so-called practical pursuits for that reason. At all times since the organization of the State, the farmers have controlled a numerical majority of the Legislature, and hereafter the new State University, considered as the especial representative of industrial interests, may confidently hope to receive from the State Legislature such endowment as may be necessary, from time to time, to establish and support in it a condition of health and strength.

*Second.* Men engaged in agriculture and the laborious pursuits, always numerically the strongest, have, in the last quarter of a century become financially the most able class of the population of the State. These men, whose benefactions of existing colleges have been hitherto disproportionately small, considering their pecuniary ability, will stand in entirely different relations to the new State University. Their benefactions, which have been small and infrequent, partly on account of a desire distinctly felt and expressed for a renovation of the course of instruction obtaining in existing colleges, and partly from the division, practically amounting to destruction of interest, caused by the co-existence of many similar institutions in the immediate vicinity of each other, will begin to flow towards a College that will to some extent represent modern ideas of education, and will at the same time appeal powerfully to all their distinctive predilections and partialities. Whole classes, as well as individuals therein, will be disposed to cherish and sustain an institution that appears to be in an especial manner *their* college.

*Third.* The new college, deemed to represent in an especial manner the educational interests of men in the practical pursuits as contradistinguished from professional men, and in fact adapting itself to the wants of all classes more pointedly and effectively than any other existing

college in the State, will appeal and successfully to the class-feeling of all such men. They will take a special pride in its success, and will make special exertions in its favor. The sons of farmers and mechanics who, feeling hitherto no particular interest in any State college, have sought more liberal and practical culture in the colleges of other States, that with more abundant means have been able more rapidly to adapt themselves to the changing educational wants of a progressive society, will do so no longer. They will feel a pride in attending a Vermont State University, whose character is specially adapted to their necessities, and in whose success they can and will feel a particular pride.

Thus, a new State University, compelled into existence by a persistent refusal of other colleges to unite, will stand from its origin upon a firm, sound and reliable pecuniary basis. It will have a strong probability of receiving a more munificent endowment from the State and from individuals than any other institution has had, or is likely to have. Managed by scholarly, shrewd, active, judicious men in all business matters, it will command the services of the ablest teachers. With no old customs and connections to hamper it and tie down its powers, it will be governed by wise, liberal and far-seeing views, neglecting no worthy topic of instruction; with large scope and liberal purpose it will open its doors for the education of men for all the exigencies and pursuits of life, reverencing the genius and thought of centuries that are gone, it will not obstinately shut its eyes to the scientific, mechanical and agricultural achievments of modern life. Thus while not neglecting the lore of the ancients, it will by ministering to the intellectual necessities and cravings of earnest practical men of the present active life, commend itself to the warm sympathies of living, moving men.

Not only will it in the phrase of the congressional act, not "exclude the scientific and classical studies," but in the control of shrewd men it will in these branches become the peer of any existing State college. While, with the power to do it effectually, its many hands will be extended to take men from all classes and fit them better for all the manifold duties of life, on land and sea, and whether with pen or voice, with plough or with quadrant, with sword or with pencil, to improve and adorn this beautiful world.

Such an institution will be attended by the young men of the State. It must succeed, for it will command all the avenues to success; and, if it succeed, it will attract from the colleges already in operation, the attendance that is the breath of their life, and ultimately they must either separately die, or be compelled for the sake of life to effect the very junction with each other that they have rejected.

If, according to the supposition made, neither of the existing colleges accepts the offer of the law, the probabilities indicate the establishment of a State University which would stand alone; and this result, however advantageous to the educational interests of the State, would operate disastrously to all the existing colleges, and probably would destroy them. But if another supposition prove true, one of the existing colleges will accept the proffer of the law and indicate its willingness to unite and actually unite with the proposed State University. With what result?

By the terms of the law, if only one of the existing colleges conforms to the requirements by voting to unite with the State University, then the location of the assenting college becomes the location of the joint resulting State University.

Let us suppose that the University of Vermont at Burlington should continue to accept the validity of the reasoning of its committee as rendered in the report herein quoted, and refuse to accept the terms of the law, then by force of the law, if Middlebury College determine to effect a junction with the State University, that University is thereupon permanently located at Middlebury.

Immediately all the investments at Middlebury in land, buildings, apparatus, equipments of every kind, become the property of the new University. The funds of Middlebury College will immediately be increased by the amount of the avails of the land scrip, less the amount of the legal claims now in force against Middlebury College. The location of the State University at Middlebury, and the merger of the existence of Middlebury College therein, will not be such an outrage of the feelings of the friends of the college as to incur any danger of avoiding any grants or conditional gifts that may have been made to the college hitherto.—The new University then would from the start save a large part of the otherwise necessary expense of land and buildings, and would possess a much larger endowment than any other institution has or probably will have. It could therefore, and bound by the requirements of the law, would, so modify the course of instruction hitherto pursued, as to adapt it to the wants of the age. The corporation of Middlebury College, on voting to effect the junction, would elect from their number seven persons to form with the nine specified corporators of the State University, its full corps of trustees. Hence all fear of any undue subordination of classical studies to the practical branches is really done away, unless the corporators chosen by Middlebury falter in their allegiance to the classics; and the necessary modification of the course is secured as well by the very requirements of law as by the numerical preponderance of the corporators specified in the act.

The new State University would have the same command of all the regular sources of collegiate strength, which I have assumed would be under its control in connection with the first hypothesis—and even more, for now its former strength would be increased by that of every friend of Middlebury College. With abundant resources a modified course of study,

and the support of every one who favors academic instruction when given at Middlebury—the great probability of State endowment, of individual benefaction, and of large attendance from its new representation of practical educational interest, all would reduce its probability of success to almost absolute certainty. It can hardly be doubted that a powerful and successful University would result.

But how, under the supposition, would the University at Burlington be affected?

Already, even with the large endowment of the State, with difficulty sustaining itself in life, can any one doubt the result? It could have no hope of aid from the State, for it would be said that already an offer liberal and generous beyond all reasonable expectation, had been deliberately refused. Such refusal to join in a common effort to improve and adapt the higher institutions of learning would be by many construed as an indication of obstinate and prejudiced adherence to old notions in opposition to the declared wishes of the majority of the people; and all inducements to private benefaction would be proportionally weakened.—With sources of strength thus diminished, it would have still less than its present ability to adapt to present requirements its methods of instruction; and, however postponed, a diminished attendance must sooner or later conspire with other causes to produce a lingering decay that could only end in death.

The recollection of the omission to seize the right opportunity for recuperation, combined with the constant observation of the growing strength of the rival institution, would have force to prevent a saving and transfer of the property of the institutions to the new University, even if that were practicable.

And land, buildings and equipments, would either revert to donors, or go to decay, or be sold to the scheming and enterprising managers of some private institution, and be measurably lost to the general cause of education.

Death, from inability to compete with advantages beyond its reach, must ultimately close the doors of the University, and in so doing leave a feeling of hardness and enmity for generations, and thus that harmony and union of feeling and interest, the want of which has cursed the higher educational interests of the State for so many years, would still be lacking, and a hostility that would indeed have less power for mischief would remain a continual hindrance to advancement.

Such may easily be supposed to be the results if one college should accept the proposed terms while the others should refuse; and that at least one of the two institutions will accept these terms is rendered exceedingly probable, by the adoption in October last of a series of resolutions by the corporation of the University of Vermont, pointing strongly in this direction, as follows:

## RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE CORPORATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT, OCTOBER 20TH, 1863.

*Whereas*, The recent grant, by the act of Congress, of lands for the support of Agricultural Colleges in the various States of the Union, and the recent acceptance by this State of such grant, seem to open the way by which the educational strength of the State may be increased, and a union and harmony of action on the part of the friends of education secured, which is exceedingly desirable. And

*Whereas*, From the position occupied by the different Colleges of the State, an expression of the views of their Trustees, upon the subject of the establishment of an Agricultural College in this State, may be deemed of importance: Therefore,

*Resolved*, 1st, That a consolidation of the higher educational interests of the State, by a union of the collegiate institutions respectively located at Norwich, Middlebury and Burlington, and a merging of their separate corporate existence in the establishment of a single State University which shall assume such character as shall combine all the distinctive excellences of the three colleges now existing, and, at the same time comply with all the requirements of the Act of Congress for the establishment and support of agricultural colleges, and of the act of the State accepting the grant made by said act of Congress, is a measure that will directly and powerfully promote the general educational welfare of Vermont.

*Resolved*, 2d, That in view of the paramount importance of such consolidation of strength and means, all minor questions of location, and other details, should be disregarded by every true friend of education until the main object of such consolidation is effected.

The men who adopted these resolutions are undoubtedly prepared to act in the spirit indicated.

If the two existing colleges at Middlebury and Burlington accept the terms of the law, and by vote become merged in the existence of a resulting college, then a somewhat different and still more hopeful condition of things may be expected.

Immediately upon such merger, the pecuniary fund of the resulting State University will consist of the avails of the land scrip, increased by the actual value of the corporate property of both colleges over and above the amount of legal and valid claims against them. If we estimate the value of the scrip at $130,000, the property of the U. V. M. is estimated at $130,000, more than sufficient to pay its debts, and Middlebury having sustained itself entirely upon individual benefaction, may be considered to have property of the same amount. Thus then the new University may be considered to have a fund at the start of from $350,000 to $400,000. It will also, as in the previous hypothesis, for the same reasons and to the same extent, command through the probability of state and individual endowment and increased attendance, all the regular sources of collegiate strength, and so far as a probability of present and

future pecuniary strength is concerned, may be considered to have most encouraging prospects.

And as far as pecuniary matters, sources of supply and the comparative economy of a union of colleges is concerned, there is scarcely a difference of opinion in the whole State.

The main cause of diverse expressions of opinion lies in the necessity, under the law, of locating the new State University either at Middlebury or Burlington, and by such location at one place, of deserting the other.

Throughout the whole prolonged discussion not a syllable has been uttered against the theory of the necessity and desirability of a consolidation of colleges. Could the particular friends of either college be sure that the location of their University would be selected as the location of the new University, they at least would cease all opposition to the law. The inevitable necessity under the law, of a desertion of one or other of the two locations, is the cause of all the woe that has found expression. It may be, and indeed it is entirely evident to every sane mind, that a love of sound learning, good sense, and simple economy, all combine to vindicate fully the wisdom of a collegiate consolidation, and the management and direction of the higher educational interests of the State by a single corporation; but local feelings and prejudices, with the danger of affecting injuriously local interests, have stood directly in the way of a consummation so devoutly to be wished.

By the terms of the law, as it stands, when two or more of the existing colleges shall have determined to unite with the State University, then it shall devolve upon certain three named commissioners to locate the new University, but it must be located where is situated one of the uniting colleges.

The evident intention of the law, as it now stands, is to create from all the institutions that may be disposed to unite with the State University, a single University, with all its branches located in a single place, controlled and managed by a single joint corporation, thus effecting a complete consolidation of collegiate interests. It is plain, too, that the two main objects in view are to secure such modification of the course of instruction as will give more attention to certain specified branches; and to insure greater economy by intrusting the control of collegiate education to a newly constructed and single corporation; and it would be hopeless to expect any future modification of law that would render the accomplishment of these two main objects in the least uncertain, or any less certain than by the present law.

As before remarked, the manifest intention of the law is to create a single University, all of whose departments shall be collected together in a single locality; and under any ordinary circumstances, the collection of all the different departments in one locality would be the natural and necessary consummation of the plan of union, and indeed the only reasonable completion of that plan. Unless then there be modifying circum-

stances peculiar to the educational condition of the State, the concentration of all departments of the new University at one locality is not only the proper and necessary result of the junction proposed, but the only proper and reasonable completion of the scheme.

If so, and the consolidation of all the colleges in the State is a measure of paramount importance and indispensable necessity; and if in order to the completion of such consolidation, the concentration of all departments in one location, and the desertion of every other location are indispensable to the perfect carrying out of the plan of union; then whatever loss or damage may inure to individuals or to particular localities, is not to be allowed to stand in the way of the consummation of the union The highest educational good of the State is to be preferred to the advancement of private or local interests.

It is true that the present law imperatively and in plain terms requires such concentration of all departments of the new University in one locality; but while admitting that such concentration would under ordinary circumstances be proper and necessary, even if it were not in terms required; still it is not at all unreasonable to anticipate that a modification of the law in regard to such concentration could be procured hereafter, under certain conditions, if it could be demonstrated that the two great objects of the law, the modification of the course of study, and the management and direction of collegiate education by one corporation, could as well and more economically be attained without requiring any such absolute concentration. By the junction of the two colleges with the new University, as has been shown, more of pecuniary strength would be secured than by any other combination supposable; but however unanswerable might be the reasons urged for a concentration of all departments of the new University, the very desertion of one locality by the preference of the other would leave a bitterness behind, that as in the last supposed case, would for generations prevent that union and harmony of feeling and interest, without which any union of colleges must be deprived of much of the benefit that might legitimately be expected therefrom.

The very walls of the deserted buildings would for years remind the friends of the institution once occupying them of the loss they had sustained, and prevent that cordial and sincere support of the new college which is so extremely desirable.

But there can be no possible ground of hope for a modification of the law which shall dispense with the concentration of all departments of the new University in one locality and the consequent desertion of the other, so long as either of the two colleges shall hold itself aloof and refuse to accept the law. If one of these colleges accepts the law and the other refuses to accept, all hope of any such modification is at once extinguished. Such refusal would be received by all as a preference of particular interests to the general good, and so construed would prevent the granting of an amendment of a law which had been accepted by one

institution in good faith, to accommodate the wishes of another that had positively refused to accept the law at all.

And the college which had accepted the law as it stood, and by so doing had sacrificed all its own individual plans and predilections for the promotion of public good, could, and undoubtedly would, urge against the adoption of any modification of the law to suit the wishes of an institution that was not willing to incur any, the least hazard, the extreme unfairness of any such course.

But if the corporation of the University of Vermont should still continue to be actuated by the catholic spirit of their resolutions of Oct. last, and the corporation of Middlebury College should entertain the same generous and unselfish views, and the two colleges after conference should come to a full and definite understanding with each other, by which they should in good faith agree to accept the act of incorporation as it stands; and also agree upon a concurrent effort to procure such modification of the act by subsequent legislation, as should either specifically provide that all of the instruction given by the State University in the so-called classical and academic departments should be given at one branch of the new college, to be located, for instance, at Middlebury; while all other instruction in the branches relating to agriculture and the mechanical pursuits, in the modern languages, in the natural sciences, in English Literature, and in all the professional schools, should be given in the branch located at Burlington; or upon an amendment that should leave the matter of concentrating all the branches or departments of the new college at one locality, or of distributing its departments between the two localities, to be determined by the corporation of the new college,—then all the benefits of recent legislation would be fully secured, and there need be little doubt but that any such or similar modification of law could be obtained, which should be urged by the friends of both institutions, and which would demonstrably promote the interests of education.

While it may be freely admitted that in the absence of all modifying circumstances, a complete concentration at one place of all the different departments of a State University is much preferable to any arrangement that locates its different departments at as many different localities, it is not at all certain that a condition of educational affairs might not exist, which might not only admit, but which should almost require some other.

Were our State a new Commonwealth, having no University or College, and were the question unembarrassed of all considerations other than as to what was the best abstract plan for the establishment, support and direction of a State University, there could be little doubt but that a complete and entire concentration of all the departments of such an institution at one place would be the only plan that would be tolerated, or indeed tolerable. But such is not our condition. For more than 60 years two colleges of high character have been struggling with adverse

circumstances. Thrown into a condition of almost inevitable rivalry by accident rather than through the deliberate intention of any one; they have both accomplished much valuable work for the State, but yet have mutually stood in the way of each other. Both have troops of strong and warm friends, whose devotion and affection have been severely tried and fully proved. Both have made large investments in lands, buildings and equipments. Both have been in the receipt of large benefactions from individual liberality, most of which have been bestowed upon either express or implied conditions of permanent use of such gifts for the prosecution of the work of education in the same localities; and both are in danger of absolute extinction if one is selected in preference to the other.

While the colleges of other States of no higher character for excellence have been increasing in power and resources, our own have been struggling against the tide of pecuniary enbarrassment from their very co-existence in the immediate neighborhood of each other as well as of the colleges of other States, each pulling down the other until the coming of the present war, so affecting the public mind as to make a decided change in the character and tendency of college education inevitable, and at the same time by diverting young men from attendance upon them taking away the power of such radical change, seems to have brought on the crisis of their fate.

In view of all the circumstances and probabilities that have been mentioned, it is not at all unreasonable to predict that the time of such decided change in the higher education of the young men of the State is now close at hand.

And when the attitude of one of these two colleges, as indicated in its resolutions herein quoted, is considered, it is entirely reasonable to say that the essential change alluded to will be worked, and that shortly, in one of three ways. Either the State University will unite with the one college, leaving the other to struggle along with increased burdens and diminished prospect of success. Or the State University will unite with both, selecting the locality of one and concentrating there, involving the desertion of the other locality. Or the State University will be united with both and will operate through two branches one located at Burlington and one at Middlebury.

So much has already been said of the objections that have been, and well may be, urged against the first two of the three alternatives, that further comment is perhaps unnecessary, and it remains to draw attention to the fact that the adoption of the last alternative will avoid the force of the most formidable of these objections, and, at the same time will adapt itself to the condition and cirrumstances of the State in educational matters.

*First*, then, the establishment of a State University, operating through two departments, situated respectively at Burlington and Middlebury, would secure to the cause of education in our State that unity of purpose and harmony of action which is the principal object and richest possible fruit of the recent law, and the want of which has divided the counsels and diminished the power of the friends of education. No other plan of union can so well accomplish this most desirable end; and in no other way is it possible fully to accomplish this object at all, until the lapse of years shall have worn away the bitterness of feeling that inevitably will follow the desertion of either of these localities for educational purposes.

*Secondly.* The important and essential modification of the methods and scope of the higher education given in our State, which may be called the next great educational purpose of the law, will be more easily, more rapidly and more surely brought about through the intervention of a single University with separate departments but controlled and directed by one corporation, than in any other way. Strong objections to any union of these colleges and their conjunction with the new University, have been urged from two opposite directions. On the one hand the friends of the elder collegiate system of education, who habitually attribute paramount consequence to the classics, very plausibly and ably as well as sincerely, have urged, in opposition to such union, the danger, in the present state of the public mind, that any such conjunction would almost certainly tend to subordinate the classical studies to the scientific and practical branches, that thereby the standard of general culture would be degraded, and harm would ensue. This view was forcibly presented at the public discussion of this very college question during the session of the last Legislature; and at a large gathering of the friends of education during the meeting of the State Teacher's Association, the desirability of a complete separation of classical culture from immediate contact with the scientific and practical branches, was very ably, and to many minds convincingly, presented by one of the ablest and most experienced educators of our State. On the other hand the earnest advocates of a change in methods of instruction which shall give more prominence to the natural sciences and modern languages, are possessed with a fixed apprehension that such change could only be brought about in either of the two colleges by an absolute and entire reconstruction, and that any such reconstruction in either is entirely hopeless under present circumstances. And those friends of education who are particularly desirous for the elevation and education of men engaged and to be engaged in industrial pursuits, have entertained and still cherish the notion that there exists generally such an undue and exclusive appreciation of classic culture among the managers of collegiate institutions, that any conjunction of "the sciences relating to agriculture and the mechanic arts" with the

classics in the same course of collegiate studies, would infallibly result in the complete subordination and degradation of the practical branches. These fear, and express their fears, that any adoption of the practical branches into the course of study of either of these colleges, would only be a formal appreciation of them with a more decided relish for the funds bestowed specifically for their benefit, than for the change of methods that are imperatively required by a complete fulfillment of the law.

Every such objection, every apprehension of the undue subordination of one class of studies to another, would at once disappear upon the formation of a single State University operating through two branches in two different locations.

*Thirdly.* By the establishment of a University operating through two branches, nearly, if not entirely, all loss of investments hitherto made for the promotion of education would be saved. When the history of the struggle for life through which both of these colleges have passed is recalled, and the thousand embarrassments by which the course of each has been hampered and impeded, are brought to mind; few can repress a feeling of admiration for the persistent liberality of the friends of education and of the self-sacrificing spirit of those connected as instructors with those two colleges. The buildings and grounds devoted to educational uses are, and should continue to be enduring monuments of the faithfulness with which a few men have discharged their highest duties, and of the generous liberality of the friends of learning. A very large proportion of the subscriptions and endowments, that have so far delayed the dissolution of both of the colleges, has been bestowed either upon an express condition terminating the benefit of the gift on the removal of the institution from its present locality, or under circumstances in all good faith implying such condition. Many of the individual gifts of this character would be certainly forfeited, and all of them would be in danger of forfeiture by a removal of either of these colleges from its present location. A knowledge of the existence of this danger has ever operated as an obstacle to the entertainment of any project of union, as is apparent as well from the tone of prevalent remark in regard to it, as from the report of the committee of the U. V. M. quoted in this discussion.

The perfection of the union and the establishment of a State University consisting of Middlebury College and the University of Vermont, the modification of law necessary for which could easily be secured on the joint petition of the two colleges, would avoid every danger of the loss of any conditional benefactions, and would save entirely for the educational uses of the State, all investments in buildings, grounds, libraries, &c., &c,

*Fourth.* No loss would ensue to the local interests of either locality, in case of the establishment of one University with two branches. The fear of jeopardising local interests has much obstructed true progress in educational matters in our State. The existence of these two institutions for so many years in their respective localities, has caused a very intimate connection of the interests of each institution with the local interests of its locality, the severing of which in either case would occasion a severe shock.

This is most emphatically true at Middlebury College. The college at Middlebury has so intertwined its own interests with those of the vicinity that its success is an object of intense interest to the whole county. Every man feels an honest pride in the college. A warm and strong interest in the welfare of the college is a social characteristic of Addison County. They throng its halls at Commencement, they watch its course with pride, and the day is really a holiday throughout the vicinity, when the well recognized business of every man is to manifest his interest in the college.

If the policy of concentration be adopted and the State University be located at Burlington, Middlebury would necessarily be deserted, and a vacuum be created which nothing else would fill, and for which nothing could compensate. A similar loss would occur at Burlington should the State University concentrate at Middlebury.

But if the opposite policy prevail, wherever the academic branch of the State University be located, there the least attendance that can be expected will be a large increase upon the previous attendance, for there will be gathered all who otherwise would attend upon the other college ordinarily, if no change had been made, and so the local interests would in that locality be benefited rather than injured. And in the other locality, the opportunities that would be presented for improvement in the sciences relating to agriculture, the mechanic arts, and all the natural sciences, as well as in the modern languages and the mastery of military and professional learning, would, it is reasonable to suppose, gather a much larger attendance than was ever secured under other circumstances. So the local interests of this locality would receive no injury.

*Fifthly.* The establishment of a single University operating through different branches, is in itself, although unusual in this country, by no means a novelty. The leading Universities of England and the continent are thus constituted, consisting of various and sometimes numerous colleges, each independent of the other, but united under one common head, and governed by certain general regulations. It is true that the different branches of those Universities are generally, perhaps always, located in the immediate vicinity of each other, and generally in the same city. But if the practicability of the union of several independent colleges in one

University be admitted or proved, it is easy to be convinced that peculiar circumstances or necessities may well carry the principle further as tolerating the union in one common University of several colleges, similar in character, though not in the immediate vicinity of each other. And the existence of circumstances may be supposed, as in the matter of the union of our own colleges, which may make it proper not only to tolerate, but to encourage such conjunction.

*Sixthly.* The union of the two colleges in one University in such a way as to involve the necessity of no removal, no loss, and secure concert and unanimity among the friends of general culture, and to provide fully and fairly for the instruction of men in every branch of art, science and letters, without any contest between different classes of studies, and without any subordination or degradation of any, will operate to produce such a unanimity of purpose, such a cordiality of feeling and such a universality of interest, that it may confidently be expected that any reasonable pecuniary assistance which the progress of time may show to be necessary to the steady progress of education, will be granted by the State readily and with little objection. There will no longer be any conflicting interests of rival institutions; no jostling of opinions between those who favor classical learning and those who style themselves practical men. The University in adapting itself to the diverse educational wants of all classes, will have removed all cause of difference of opinion or of opposition. All the friends of sound learning will advance in one solid column, united in one common purpose, filled with one common inspiration, and the legions of ignorance and prejudice will retire before them, without a contest. The new and strange fashion will prevail, of taking as well pleasure as pride in ministering to the needs of the State University, where ample provision is to be made for the educational wants of all classes and every individual.

*Seventhly.* Such a conjunction of various branches under one common head, giving due meed of attention to each class of studies, with no interference or undue preponderance of any, will suit itself exactly in one or other of its branches to the tastes, the wants, and partialities of every friend of every class of studies. It will appeal to the sympathies and touch the pride in turn of each class and each individual, and thus the tendency will be to enlarge and deepen the stream of individual benefaction. Being the State University, it will draw upon the patriotic pride of all, and meeting the particular wants of each, all will be conciliated and become interested. Men of liberal disposition having means at their disposal, will not hesitate between the claims of two rival colleges, but knowing that by giving they will promote the general interest of the

whole State, while they may give such direction to their benefaction as will cause its benefit to enure to the advancement of classical education, or that of the practical sciences, as each may prefer, they will give and give generously.

*Eighthly.* The union thus formed, receiving at once from the avails of the land scrip a large addition to its resources, will be able to vie with the institutions of other States in some measure, in its equipments and attractions—and this with the common and general interest of the citizens, the natural pride of State, and the enlargement of the scope of instruction, will draw our own young men to the hall of their own State University for instruction. From Dartmouth and Harvard, from Union and Yale, from Brown and from Williams, they will be attracted to the College of their own State, and then Vermont will do what long ago she should have done, educate her own children.

Such are some of the considerations that prominently suggest themselves in any thoughful consideration of this great subject; and they press themselves forcibly forward before the public mind. For many years, among the wiser friends of education in Vermont, the conviction has more and more prevailed, that the reduction of our numerous, various and independent educational institutions to one complete and symmetric system, is the first and greatest need of the State. Thus a gradual return to the original plan of the early friends of education has long been earnestly advised, and the gradual substitution of Graded Public Schools for Academies has naturally grown out of this prevalent conviction.

The union of our colleges has long been looked upon as the next step in the natural order of progressive advancement, and has been with constantly increasing momentum urging itself upon general attention. Under ordinary circumstances the consummation of such union might possibly not have been generally expected for some years; but the liberal grant of public lands by Congress and its formal acceptation by the State, have united to force the matter forward, until by the act for the establishment of the Vermont State University and Associate Colleges, an opportunity so favorable for the completion of a consolidation upon some terms is offered, that it would be almost simple to believe that nothing will be attempted or accomplished under the act.

Indeed the probabilities are so strong as to amount to a certainty that if neither of our colleges conclude a connection with the State University, under the charter, then the new State University will be organized upon a new and independent basis, and will begin its proper work and under the most favorable circumstances, with such probable results to other institutions as have been already herein suggested.

But it is so probable as to be measurably certain, that either one or both of the colleges will effect a junction with the new University.

Should this junction be effected with one, or with both? If with both, how? By complete concentration in one place? By a single University operating in two localities?

These are important questions, and they are by no means abstract questions; but in the full signification of the terms they are practical questions, that must and will be presently determined to the great benefit or detriment of the educational prospects of the whole State.

The auspicious time, so long hoped for by many good men, seems to have come, when propriety, expediency and indeed necessity combine to scatter all frivolous objections, and demand a decision.

In the full belief that that decision will be made; that at least one of these colleges will accept the charter and profit by it, if the other does not; compelled to know fully and feel deeply the important bearing of the decision to be made upon the general educational interests of the whole state, including of course those that appertain more particularly to common schools, I have felt constrained by a sense of duty to attempt thus early in a year destined to be the most eventful and important year in the history of the educational progress of our State, to present to the public mind a view of a few of the many and important considerations that bear upon the disposal of this great question. No apologies seem to be necessary for the course taken. It is simply a compliance with the requirement of the law which directs the Secretary "to exert himself constantly and faithfully to promote the highest interests of education in the State."

I respectfully ask, that you will look over this circular, and as far as convenient bring the subject before the minds of other intelligent men. If the suggestions herein carry weight enough to secure discussion and thought, a public sentiment will be formed and in one way or another expressed, which will exercise a controlling power upon the disposition of this matter.

And I also solicit from you, as soon as practicable, an expression of your own views as well as a statement of the prevalent opinion of judicious men in your vicinity in regard to the desirability and practicality of effecting an enduring union of colleges.

When such union shall be, as it may be and probably will be, accomplished; when all the friends of higher culture shall unitedly cluster around one strong and permanent State University; when all local and partizan jealousy shall be extinguished; when by State and individual benefaction the one State University shall have the pecuniary ability and the prospect of educational power, to call home again to her ample halls, thronged with the young men of the State, our Boardmans, our Shedds our Clarks, and a host of other true and strong men, a new day will have dawned upon Vermont, and a brighter than sun-light will gild the hoary crests, of her solemn and grand old mountains.

J. S. ADAMS, Secretary.

Such was the circular, and it was distributed through the State.—Its purpose was to present a fair and impartial sketch of the origin of the division of the collegiate strength of the State, showing as the fact seems to have been, that it arose rather from a true and unselfish devotion to the interests of education than out of partizan feeling; and drawing attention to the intimate and necessary inter-dependence and relation existing between all the various grades of educational institutions, it endeavored to establish the feasibility and desirability of perfecting the symmetry and increasing the power of the State Educational system by uniting the existing colleges of the State in one State University.

Without attempting to argue at length and precisely the various questions necessarily involved, the attempt was made to bring the subject home to the apprehension and interests of all classes, many of whom do not habitually give their attention to the discussion of the bearings and tendencies of the higher educational seminaries.

An effort was made to show that many of the obstacles in the way of a college union were not, as was supposed and often stated, insuperable; and to combat the somewhat prevalent impression that, owing to the difficulty of surmounting those obstacles, no measures would be taken by either of the existing colleges to profit by the act of incorporation, but that it would become null and void for want of acceptation by either of those institutions. The prediction was ventured that at least one of the State Colleges would accept and conform to the requirements of the act, and the averment was made, that even in case all of the colleges should decline the proposed union, still in such case, in all probability, a State Agricultural College would be established.

And events that have occurred since the distribution of the circular, have fully justified the prediction; for already the University of Vermont, through the action of its authorized trustees, and in implicit reliance upon the fulfilment of the pledged faith of the State, has formally after long and well considered discussion, elected to unite with the newly constituted University and sacrificing its own individual and peculiar predilections in an earnest devotion to the highest educational welfare of the State, and incurring the risk of a rupture of all the many and cherished associations that for more than half a century have connected the college with the unsurpassed beauty of its surroundings, has formally and solemnly transferred all its property, rights and privileges, to the Vermont State University.

It will be seen thus that the alternative courses of action contemplated in the circular as possible, are now by the action of the U. V. M. reduced in number. And it is now certain, either that Norwich and Middlebury will both refuse to unite, or one alone will unite, or both will accept the act of incorporation and join with the U. V. M. in constituting together a single, powerful and permanent State University.

While the discussion that has resulted from the recent legislation of the State has indicated an almost universal concession of the desirability of a junction of the colleges, it has also revealed a great diversity of views as to the practical measures by which so desirable a result may be attained. And the diversity of view has apparently been much enhanced by a great difference of opinion as to the character which should be given to an Agricultural College established under the congressional act.

As this point has been somewhat discussed by the Hon. Isaac Newton, commissioner of the National Agricultural Department, in his bimonthly Report for January and February last, I insert that portion of the report which relates to this subject, which may be considered to be, in a measure, an official interpretation of the intention of the act of Congress.

## AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES.

This Department has received various letters asking its views relative to the best system of instruction for the agricultural colleges to be established under the act of Congress of July 2, 1862, donating public lands to the several States and Territories to provide colleges for the benefit of agricultural and mechanic arts. As Congress had in view the establishment of at least one college in each of the States and Territories, and as the experience of the United States in such institutions has not been either extensive or successful, it is highly necessary that public sentiment should be awakened, that by enlightened action success may be obtained. This public sentiment cannot be acted on, in this matter, more speedily than through this Department, and hence it now complies with the request in these letters; not expecting to control this public sentiment, but simply to aid in its development, and to be the means of uniting its action.

But there are other reasons why the Department must ever be deeply interested in the successful establishment of these colleges. Some of them are the following:

1. The Department needs much the aid it would derive from these colleges. They will have experimental gardens and farms, skilful professors to properly conduct experiments, to carefully note them, and to properly report them. Hence, when the Department imports new seeds and plants, it can, through their aid, at once determine their adaptability to this country, and the climate, soil, and cultivation proper to each. The distribution of seeds, cuttings, &c., could then be made on a most economical basis, because they would be distributed only where they could be advantageously grown. Seeds, when thus tested, could be grown by these institutions, and thus a large sum of money now sent abroad would be distributed at home.

2. From these colleges would be received reports of the experiments made, and these would be placed before the farming public through the reports of the Department, and thus, with the seeds and cuttings distributed, would be communicated the mode of cultivation adapted to each.

3. A great object with this Department must be to systematize the agriculture of the United States; and how can this be so well done, over a country so extensive, and of such diversified latitudes and products, as by the aid of local institutions, under the direction of high intelligence, and aided by the special agencies which will be found in them?

4. To render most practicable and useful such systematized farming, the aid of institutions having local influence will be essential, as instructors of leading farmers, and to obtain such State legislation as may, from time to time, become necessary to a more speedy advancement.

These reasons, without stating others, are sufficient to show how deep an interest this Department must ever take in the proper establishment of these industrial colleges.

In considering such establishment, the first inquiry to be made is, *What course of instruction should be adopted by them?*

There are no settled opinions, in answer to this question, to be found in the United States. So far as they have been expressed in the course of study in our few agricultural schools, and in the writings of those who have sought to mould public opinion, the instruction proposed has contemplated a preparation for the farm only. The languages have generally been regarded as useless, and the course of mathematical studies has been too limited. In this, we think, lies the failure of our agricultural colleges. Such limitation may be adapted to European affairs, where the son seeks to continue in the father's occupation. But here the farmer's son is no more destined to agricultural pursuits than the son of a professional man. Here the merchant longs to be released from the distracting cares of commercial pursuits, and the opulent manufacturer from the dangers of changing markets. Both anxiously desire the rest and enjoyment found in the country life. And with them in this wish is the professional man and the politician. And it is a natural desire; it is a part of man's nature, as it was in conformity with it that God placed our first parents in the garden of Eden, or, that the homes of illustrious Americans have become a part of their fame, as Mount Vernon, Monticello, Ashland, and Marshfield. And this desire would be a hundred fold strengthened if early education fitted all for an intelligent pursuit of agriculture, as well as other occupations of civilized life. A system of education, to be successful, must be in conformity to the tastes and pursuits of a people. The time is not yet come in the United States when the son will inherit the father's occupation. Nor is it desirable that it ever should be so. The eminent success of Americans in all the pursuits of life; the intellectual and physical energy they have displayed in them; the facility with which this intellect takes hold of the most diverse pursuits—all point to a condition so different, both mentally and socially, from the countries of Europe, that its agricultural schools furnish but an imperfect basis upon which to rear our own. We must mark out a path for ourselves.

Congress, in the act referred to, seems to have been governed by this American condition of things. Its provisions are broad and liberal. It recites that in the colleges to be established "the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life."

It will be seen from this that these colleges are not to be agricultural only. The education of mechanic, manufacturer, merchant, and miner, is demanded, as well as of the tiller of the soil. *All* the industrial classes are to be fitted for an intelligent career in the several pursuits of life. Anything less broad would not have been equal justice to all. It requires, too, military instruction—that the citizen may be qualified for duties the discharge of which is now demanded of so many —and it does not exclude "other scientific and classical studies."

The American youth have a broad career before them. Neither the farm, nor the workshop, nor a subdivided labor in either is to be the bound of their emulation or labor. The son of the farmer must be permitted to obey the promptings within him, and, like Mr. Webster, to hang the scythe on the tree, or, like Mr. Clay, to ride to the highest political stations, as well as on the horse's back to mill. Like Washington, he should be fitted for the chain and the compass, or the camp, or political rule, or the management of a landed estate.

It may be answered in the senseless aphorism that a "Jack of all trades is master of none." The career of Henry Ward Beecher furnishes a reply. He lately told us, when in England, that he was bell-ringer, too, in his first church. When

at Indianapolis he published an agricultural paper; and during the past summer, the Journal of that city, alluding to the admiration of strangers for the beauty of its gardens and yards, ornamented with flowers, and evergreens, and shrubs, gave all the credit to Mr. Beecher's teachings when there. He left in the west "the Beecher rhubarb"—a seedling variety, originated by him, not inferior to any other—and he reformed the butter market of that city. And he did these things whilst he was the first of its preachers. His recent political speeches in England exhibit his power in another field.

Another case, showing the superiority of a general education of the faculties of the mind over the disciplining of a few only, is seen in an eminent American manufacturer and inventor. In exhibiting in England one of his inventions he had the work mostly done there, but made slow progress in completing it. Writing home, he said that in English shops the workmen are trained to such subdivisions of labor that one of them can do the work of only one part of an engine; that one part must be done before another workman can do his part; that few of them can superintend the entire work of an engine; whilst in his own manufactory here, most of his workmen were competent to do this. And to this subdivision he attributes the want of inventive talent in England.

Apart, then, from pre-eminent ability, we see that both in education and labor, a development of mental power is promoted by a general discipline of all the faculties of the mind, and that instruction dwarfed to a particular pursuit, results in a dwarfed mind itself; that the powers of the mind, like those of the body, achieve most when their fully developed strength is centred, for the time, on the accomplishment of a certain object. If our greatest minds have found this developed strength in liberal studies, lesser minds must be governed by the same law of progress. Confine their faculties to a narrow routine of study, and whilst a few faculties may be partially strengthened, others remain undeveloped.

In the agriculture of England and of the continent, we see the influence of limited instruction. A ploughman continues to be but a ploughman, and a worker in the vineyard occupies the place filled by his grandfather's grandfather. Whatever of progress we find in England and Scotland, is to be attributed to a higher and broader development of mind. Turn to France, and in the following description of its agriculture of the south, we see the results of subdivided instruction. One of our most intelligent consuls thus writes:

"I received the request from the Agricultural department to furnish its statistics. I know not what to do. I, who have always so loved agricultural and horticultural pursuits, would certainly be expected to do much in this line. But when I look around, I find absolutely nothing in all France to interest our country in that line. So far is France behind us in all labor-saving machinery, in every thing relating to agriculture, or the mechanic arts even, that I know it is the wrong place to seek light. Many things are unearthed at Pompeii and Herculaneum that are much in advance of anything in France. The ploughs are of the style of the ancient Egyptians—a forked tree. Their carts and wagons of the farm are four times the size of our own—awkward and clumsy affairs you might worship and not break the second commandment, for they are the likness of nothing on earth. The peasants drive in a single hog to market as in Ireland, and everything else is in the same piddling, picayune style. Is this the style to be imitated by our own large-minded, great-souled, enlightened, free-born Americans? Not by my aid or consent.

"This district, and the whole south of France from here to Nice, on the Italian border, is a land mostly of grapes; the eastern half of olives also; a poor, miserable character of farming, which we should leave, I think, after looking over the whole ground, to the small-minded small farmers of Europe. Or when we do go at grape-raising, as we will largely in California, let us go at it in our own grand style, as we raise hogs, corn, wheat, &c., &c.; no piddling or scratching like this."

Here we have graphically described the difference between the enlarged American agricultural mind, and the dwarfed European agricultural mind. Our agriculture presented a scope that demanded thought; it was vast in itself, and by its own

greatness raised up the farmers of our country to the higher standard we find in the foregoing contrast. But as population becomes more dense, there will be a tendency to European division of labor and its narrow views. This must be counteracted by liberal education. Grand as have been the achievements of American agriculture, it has been aided by a natural richness of the soil, which must be replaced and sustained by the riches of science.

But the American farmer and artisan have not yet achieved their greatest elevation either in their occupations or in their positions as American citizens. Look into the army and at the civil offices. A stranger to our institutions might readily suppose that the profession of law constituted a privileged class in this country, and that no one outside of its ranks could hold a civil or military official position. Is this just to the industrial classes? Or is it safe to the government? The mission of these classes is not one of toil merely, but of equal position as citizens. The skilful artisan, the comprehensive farmer, the far-seeing merchant, the enterprising manufacturer, should be competent, when occasion demands, to be an officer in the army, or statesman at home, or a minister abroad.

Our agricultural colleges have heretofore failed because they aimed to educate for the pursuit of agriculture only. The sons of our farmers are not less ambitious of distinction than others, and an education that regards them as farmers only, cannot meet their approbation. The purpose of an education is to teach men to observe and to think—these are alike essential to all pursuits, and in these operations of the mind all the faculties are called in requisition. A skilful and correct use of their power is the boon of instruction. Their general development is first to be accomplished, and subsequently this developed power is to be applied to particular pursuits. A course of instruction regarded merely as information is not less necessary to one pursuit than another; for a mere farmer or mechanic is not less to be discountenanced than a mere lawyer. General science and knowledge is as essential, and is as becoming, to the one as the other. All pursuits, then, may have a common course of instruction.

From these general remarks, rendered necessary by prevailing erroneous opinions respecting the instruction suitable to the industrial classes, we return to the question asked, that it may now be answered specifically—*what course of instruction should be adopted in our industrial colleges?*

1. *Languages.*—Besides the considerations just advanced, a knowledge of the English language, to express his thoughts, either in writing or speaking, clearly, forcibly, and elegantly, is as important to one engaged in an industrial pursuit as in a professional. In early years, as twelve to sixteen, a youth cannot make more progress in learning it, than by the study of the Latin language. It is a language that has added much to our own. Its study familiarizes the pupil with English words and their meanings, and their use to express ideas both correctly and elegantly. The study of the Latin grammar instructs him in the English grammar. And the knowledge of Latin is absolutely essential, if he would better understand and more readily remember the numerous words derived from this language used in works on the natural sciences.

The German language is used so extensively in the business transactions of many parts of the United States, that opportunity to acquire it should be given in these colleges. It need not, however, be made an essential part of the regular course of study.

2. *The Mathematics.*—The study of mechanical laws is directly connected with the mechanical and manufacturing arts. So far as mathematics is essential to their understanding, to disciplining the mind, and a thorough knowledge of natural sciences, they should be made a part of the course of study.

3. Of the other branches of study, we cannot do better than to adopt the following, transmitted to the Department by Richard Owen, a brother of Robert Dale Owen, and of the late David Dale Owen, a name familiar to every intelligent citizen on account of his eminent attainments in science, and his practical application of them in geological and mineralogical surveys. Mr. Richard Owen is now a professor

in the State University of Indiana, at Bloomington, and is not less thorough in his scientific acquirements. He has received a military education also, and until recently commanded a division of the Indiana troops.

A course of study, although briefly laid down by one who is as practical as learned, cannot but receive the careful consideration of all.

Mr. Owen, in his letter, says:

"I hasten now to furnish, as you request, an outline of the plan of study which I think might be advantageously adopted, throwing out other hints which can receive consideration, provided the means are sufficient and the public mind prepared.

"Finding the great advantage of addressing all instruction, as far as practicable to the eye, (in addition to that given through the medium of the ear,) I would recommend a Museum, (besides the lecture-room, each having its own appropriate specimens and diagrams,) to contain.—

"1. All the most important minerals, arranged according to Dana's text-book.

"2. The necessary rocks and fossils, to illustrate pretty thoroughly each geological period.

"3. A suite of plants, arranged according to the natural orders.

"4. Specimens of all the most important seed vessels (chiefly fruits) and seeds, (grains, grapes, &c.)

"5. A zoological department, exhibiting the most important animals from the sponge and polyp, up through the star fishes and sea-eggs, worms, crustaceans, and insects, (particularly those injurious to agriculture,) mollusks, fishes, reptiles, birds and mammals, (including the skeletons of all the domestic animals,) to end with man.

"6. Numerous charts, exhibiting streams of time, chemical tables, geological sections, maps of physical geography, giving meteorology, distribution of plants, animals, rain, &c.

"7. A good set of philosophical instruments to illustrate the department of natural philosophy and land surveying, such as the air-pump, electrical machine, mechanical powers, rain-gauge, barometers, thermometers, hygrometers, hydrometers, microscopes, sextant with horizon, &c.

"8. Models of machinery, as grist-mills, saw-mills, paper-mills, cotton machinery and the like. Also improved agricultural implements of every description, and models of barns, bridges, grain-houses, &c.

["N. B.—This museum should be open to the agricultural and normal institutions.]

"INSTRUCTION.

"1. For *physical* development, gymnastics, agricultural operations in suitable weather, at least for a part of the classes, (the others taking the succeeding day,) as ploughing, digging, mowing, sowing, &c.

"2. For *moral* culture, religious instruction, moral philosophy, music, (especially vocal in parts,) social gatherings or re-unions, at least for some classes, each week, when they should meet the professors and their families, having some object to bring them together, such as microscopic examinations, or the magic lantern, music, or portfolios of engravings, &c., to examine.

"3. For *mental* improvement, supposing the elementary branches mastered;—then drawing, and surveying, geography, book-keeping, human anatomy, physiology and hygiene, comparative anatomy and physiology, vegetable physiology, chemistry, mineralogy and geology, botany and zoology, lectures on gardening, pruning, fruit-raising, wine-making, &c; agricultural chemistry, embracing lectures on manures, improving worn-out lands, drainage, &c.; lectures on stock-raising and farriery.

"THE NORMAL SCHOOL.

"In this a great object should be, not so much to convey any particular information of subjects to be taught, as to discipline the would-be teachers in the best method of imparting instruction in any branch or department.

"Instruction how to convey information to the youthful mind might be given on the following points:

"1. Lessons on things (objects surrounding us) of every day occurrence.

"2. Pestalozzi's system of arithmetic, (mental.)

"3. Writing on blackboard, before using either slate or paper, to give freedom to the hand.

"4. The elements of drawing and practice in estimating distances, areas, &c.

"5. Proper mode of teaching vocal music with metronome, tuning-forks, &c.

"(These last three comprise improvement of the hand, eye, and ear—consequently the developement of three senses; the taste and sense of smell do not require much cultivation.)

"6. Making each would-be teacher lecture alternately on some of the subjects under discussion, so as to practice the imparting of instruction, the professor criticising, if necessary, his style, mode of handling the subject, &c.

"N. B.—If female teachers are to be received and instructed, there should be a model kitchen for the instruction of young ladies in the proper mode of preparing wholesome food, such as household bread, and of *knowing*, not guessing, when things are sufficiently cooked; also, how to cook without the wasteful and unwholesome use of so much lard, and the advantages of boiling instead of frying constantly in grease, &c.

"MODEL FARM.

"Connected with the agricultural college there should, of course, be a model farm, and the best of stock, implements, &c; also a model garden and green-house. Connected with the normal institution there ought to be a model school-house and appurtenances, and, as above suggested, a model kitchen.

"MILITARY TRAINING.

"Perhaps by carrying out the West Point system of training, as far as consistent with study, work, &c., the necessity of a gymnasium might not be so great as in ordinary schools and colleges, where it ought undoubtedly always to be introduced under proper instruction.

"The above may serve to convey to some extent the plan which had been in my head for some time, but which had never assumed quite a definite form for want of knowing the exact circumstances under which such a plan could be worked out, and many details would of course depend upon that. For instance, Congress may, in the grant, perhaps, prescribe a certain course; the State, in accepting, may prescribe. The community, in sending, may demand certain things, but the above may, perhaps, at least serve for a basis on which any one, knowing the circumstances, can work out the superstructure."

AN EVIL AND ITS REMEDY.

This admirable course of study thus briefly sketched by Professor Owen needs no comment; it sufficiently recommends itself. But it demands what few of our collegiate institutions have—that museum, apparatus, &c., which aid so greatly the acquisition of knowledge by presenting through the senses clear ideas to the mind.

Why our institutions are deficient in these is obvious enough when we look at their too great number. The educational means of the community have been expended in building edifices, to the great detriment of thorough instruction by the help

of those agencies referred to by Mr. Owen. Each State has its dozen of colleges ;— and the apparatus, museum, library, &c., of all, would be insufficient for one. *Are these industrial colleges to be virtually destroyed by a like waste of means?*

What are these means? The act of Congress gives to each State a quantity of land equal to 30,000 acres for each senator and representative in Congress. A State that has unsold lands within its own borders may locate this grant ; but those that have not are to receive land scrip, which cannot be located by the State, but only by the assignees of the State, at $1 25 per acre. When we reflect that the homestead law gives away the public lands to actual settlers, and that no large bodies of good public farming lands remain for entry, it is pretty clear that the fund from the grant to the older States will be slowly realized, and then only at a great sacrifice.— The law ought to be so amended as to allow immediate location by all of the States. *Must the industrial classes wait for this slow realization of the fund before colleges, so important to them, can be established; and must they be limited to an inadequate course of instruction, by reason of insufficiency of the fund?* No ! Kansas has so answered, and its admirable precedent should be followed by all other States like situated. No ! Connecticut replies by bestowing its grant of lands upon Yale College. The one answers for the West, the other for the East.

The new States of the West and Southwest have had donations granted them by Congress for the establishment of universities or seminaries of learning. Among these is Kansas, and wisely determining to consolidate, and not dissipate, its college funds, it has consolidated the grant for both, merging the first one into the second, thus saving useless expense in building two edifices when one is all-sufficient, in having two sets of professors when only one is required, and by this economy securing a museum, apparatus, library, &c., so necessary for the proper instruction of all occupations, whether professional or industrial.

Under like grants we have the following universities : Ohio, at Athens ; Indiana, at Bloomington ; Illinois, at Springfield ; Missouri, at Columbia; Wisconsin, at Madison ; Iowa, at Iowa City ; Michigan, Ann Arbor. Since these universities were established many others have been, in these and other States, mostly by religious denominations, in which is usually found such course of instruction as is adapted to professional pursuits ; but not to the industrial, for want of the museum, apparatus, library, model farm, &c,, mentioned by Mr. Owen. Why retain these State universities as competitors of these private colleges? Why not render them efficient, economical, more truly State institutions, by consolidating the grants, and thus creating a college competent to the thorough education of all occupations?— The sound policy of such union is the more obvious when it is remembered that the last act does not allow any of the fund created by it to be used in buildings. The former grants have provided these and a skeleton library and apparatus, with a fund competent only to sustain a faculty inadequate to such instruction as the wants of the age and of our condition demand. But all these would constitute a basis on which, as the funds from the recent grant were realized, colleges adapted to these wants could be built up.

These views are now placed before the public in compliance with the requests that have been made, and with the hope that they will lead others to express theirs.

ISAAC NEWTON,
Commissioner.

In further elucidation of the character that should be given to the new University, when formed, the following letter from Edward Hungerford Esq., of Colchester, formerly Professor of the Natural Sciences in the U. V. M., will be read with interest.

The fact that Mr. Hungerford has now for several years been actively engaged in agricultural pursuits as a practical farmer, lends an additional force to this able exposition of what such an University should be.

CLIFF SIDE, COLCHESTER, VT., Sept. 1st, 1864.

J. S. ADAMS, ESQ.,

DEAR SIR:

You have requested me to give you my views upon the feasibility and desirability of the University scheme, and upon the importance of giving in the arrangement of its course of study due prominence to the scientific and practical features.

I take pleasure in complying with your request, more especially as I regard the bill of congress providing for or rather encouraging the states to provide for colleges devoted more especially to the sciences and arts as an educational movement of the highest importance and one which should be met by the several states with a corresponding liberality and pledge of earnestness.

Such a liberality must be exercised by this state or by the friends of education in the state in order to secure the benefits designed to be conferred, for it is evident Congress did not suppose that the sums accruing out of its gift would be sufficient to found, build up and maintain such institutions, but expects the states out of their wealth to complete what it has so generously begun.

The public seems to have fallen into a somewhat serious error in allowing its mind to rest mainly, indeed almost exclusively, upon the encouragement given by the act of Congress to farmers and farming interests, and in leaving almost entirely out of view the other features of the bill giving encouragement to the study of the mechanic arts and of military science; provisions which were quite essential to round out the act to a full and liberal embrace of the main objects which conduce to the material welfare of the State.

We have readily established institutions of various lower and higher grades for the ordinary purposes of a general education as well as for the study of the usual learned professions. And assuming that this has been done by the several states the general government encourages us to go forward and supply what is still felt to be a great want for young men proposing to devote themselves to industrial pursuits, viz: a thorough course of instruction, scientific and practical, in those arts which they propose to cultivate. It aims thus to develope the material resources of the land, to obtain more corn, better engines and machines, and a more skillful arm of defense, while it raises up a class of educated men devoted to industrial pursuits; a class we may be assured than which none will stand more firmly in the nation's honor or be more necessary to the nation's strength.

In this view the term Agricultural College which has become somewhat popular and is now passed around in connection with this bill, is not only inappropriate, but it carries with it more than the ordinary disadvantages of a false name—by detracting from the legitimate and magnanimous scope of the congressional provision, and excluding a large interest which would otherwise rise up for the institution from among those devoted to other than agricultural branches of industry.

Regarding the proposed institution in this light and so endeavoring to obtain some just conception of its high office, we should be better prepared to consider the necessary character of its instruction, and may readily understand how, although it apparently seeks practical ends, it can only be truly efficient and successful in so far as it is scientific in its methods both of investigation and instruction.

The department of agriculture, for example, which would constitute one of the branches of such an institution, must look for an intelligent foundation to all its practical instructions to a scientific and exact knowledge of vegetable anatomy and physiology. The very corner stone of an intelligent agriculture must rest upon a knowledge not only of the general laws of germination, growth and fructification of the vegetable kingdom, but still further upon a minute and more special knowledge of the structure, vital conditions, methods and times of fructification of each individual kind of agricultural product. It is not enough to say that experience has taught us how to treat these various forms of vegetable life. That wheat has been successfully grown for indefinite ages, and the main staples for periods of at least many years. The whole drift of the present educational movement so far as agriculture is concerned is to improve the present methods of cultivation with a view to increase the quantity or better the quality of the product.

The direct way to do this is by obtaining first an accurate knowledge of what the growing plant requires, and that must come from a careful study, a scientific study of the crop producing plant. The very fact that at the present time not one in a hundred of even comparatively well informed farmers is able to give an intelligent account of the processes which are going on in his own corn fields is proof enough that what we have learned has come of rather rough and casual experience, and that not one in a hundred of us is really capable of making any very great and rational improvement in the methods of cultivation.

To educate us to this—to teach us the methods by which we are to proceed as well as to attempt the solution of important questions for us, this is the province of an agricultural department. The problems are exceedingly difficult, requiring that the investigation should draw upon numerous branches of learning, as well as have regard to an almost infinite variety of influences, affecting the ultimate result, and perhaps in no department have students found themselves involved in a more obscure and intricate field.

Let me give a familiar illustration of this in a single experiment upon a limited field, say a rod square of corn. We must observe here the nature and quality of the soil, its history, i. e. the processes it has been subjected to in previous years, the crops it has borne, &c., then its present mode of preparation, the treatment of the kernel—its kind, eight-rowed or twelve, early or late—the mode of planting—distance, depth, and our own work upon the growing plant. Then come into account the meteorological phenomena—temperature of days and nights—duration of periods of hot and cold—frosts, dews, rains—in fact, an almost infinite variety of circumstances all worthy of observation and record, because all affect the final result, the aggregate weight and quality of the product.

It would probably be safe to say that scarcely one in a thousand of us could carry through such a series of observations and records, and make up the aggregate results, without previous and especial training to scientific methods.

And it is just for this reason that most of the so reported experiments of our agricultural papers really establish nothing, because that such important items of observation are left out, perhaps the very item that most affected the result.

In view of such considerations as these, it becomes, I think, sufficiently apparent that a thorough scientific as well as practical training is essential to intelligent farming.

What has been said of the agricultural applies with full force and perhaps more apparently to the mechanical and military departments of instruction.

The knowledge of the laws of forces—their mathematical discussion and their practical application—including not only the better known forces, but also the more recondite, as electricity, magnetism, &c.—all involve a series of studies of such immense range and of such a high scientific character, that an even so-called practical institution which did not involve and insist upon a thorough scientific course would be a most unpractical affair and a sheer absurdity.

The mechanical and military sciences play into each other so closely that they are necessarily considered together. Military science including as one of its chief branches, the application of machinery to the purposes of war.

It is by such reflections as these that I am forced to the conviction that no other than a thoroughly scientific institution, by which I mean one that aims to teach the exact and best established results of science, as well as to conduct its own investigations in accordance with the most approved scientific methods, can meet the spirit and intention of the congressional gift or the wants of the people.

Having thus indicated what I conceive to be an essential feature of such an institution as that under consideration, let me add a few words upon the desirability of its union with an institution of a more prominently literary character.

That under ordinary circumstances and unless there were peculiar reasons for the establishment of such a college in an isolated position, it would be more advantageous to have it maintain the relation of a branch to the parent stock of a University by the side of which it is located, it is difficult to see how any one can entertain a doubt.

The facilities for learning which arise from a combination of numerous colleges in one organization and in one locality are so apparent as scarcely to need mention.

Among these are the economy of building, of apparatus, cabinets and libraries —the strength arising from numbers from sympathy and interchange of duties on the part of officers, as well as the double office of certain members of the respective faculties. This latter advantage however is too often lost and turned into a disadvantage when attempted to be pushed too far and made to involve the imposition of so many subordinate and collateral duties upon one man as to seriously impair his efficiency in the specialty to which he should devote himself.

The moral influence flowing from a department more especially devoted to letters to students of science and art as well as from a scientific department to the student of classics may be made of a most healthful and beneficial character.*

There is a certain class of scholars who indulge a prejudice against the proximity of polytechnic schools or schools of science and art to more purely literary institutions, as though there were a certain sanctity in the classical departments of learning which might be desecrated by such contact. There might be a question whether the study of the ancient classics is after all in itself more elevating or conducive to a higher culture than the study by scientific methods of that sublime nature which still presents itself to us clothed with the dewy freshness of its early morning and which has been the inspiration of some the finest literature of the world.

And if the pretense of scholars of the present day to honor labor and approve the hand of industry is not a mere sham, it is difficult to understand why scholars should shun a contact with science because she sits as an instructor of men in useful and ornamental art and as a teacher of those processes by which alone man can assert his regal birthright in creation.

An institution such as we have been contemplating, and such an one only would enter into the plans of men capable of distinguishing the elements necessary to a successful consummation of the designs of the congressional act; such an institution cultivating both pure and applied science cannot fail to confer its share of benefits upon the other departments of the University of which it forms a part.

We might point, if it were necessary to such institutions as Yale and Harvard if examples were needed of the successful adoption and carrying out of views kindred to those have laid down.

The question then arises, can such a union be effected in this State.

I should have preferred to remain silent upon the question into which the one thus propounded resolves itself—the old question of a union of the colleges of Ver-

* I am well aware that there are those who will readily admit the former part of this proposition, but would receive with much doubt its latter assertion in regard to the influence of science. The limits to which I ought to confine myself will not admit of discussion of this point here. But it may not be superfluous to remark the somewhat singular position of those who being believers in and defenders of our piously accepted Divine Revelation by written word, manifest a remarkable timidity in regard to that manifest revelation of the Divine Mind and Character, the natural material creation. They shrink from that to which they should assert a peculiar right and fear that which they might make a powerful weapon of defence.

mont—but since I am thus brought unavoidably to it, I will venture a few observations which may not seem to some friends of education unworthy of attention.

It is my own thorough conviction that in order to the successful working of collegiate and University education in Vermont, it is first of all absolutely essential that the present conflicting elements be compounded into a harmonious whole.

The educational interests of the State must be one. Neither its population nor the pecuniary resources likely to be available for its institutions of learning, whether from the public treasury or from individual beneficence, are sufficient to justify the existence of two rival and conflicting institutions.

How this shall be brought about is a question for those more conversant with the history of Education in the State than I am to determine. One thing seems to me manifest, that whatever course is adopted, it ought to involve as an essential requisite to success the hearty co-operation of the friends of the existing colleges and to stimulate their educational pride and concentrate it upon the one University.

It is certainly worthy of very serious consideration whether any plan that does not accomplish this can be other than a failure. Let us suppose for example that under the existing law for the consolidation of the colleges of Vermont, one or more of the existing collegiate institutions from motives of any kind refuses to give in its adhesion to the new State institution. It remains alone with all its old local interests and all its old pride arrayed against the new and at first thought powerful rival. Will it therefore be crippled and die out or be finally compelled to do what it at first refused to do, give in its adhesion to the new University. It hardly seems that our experience teaches us or our knowledge of human nature permits us to believe that such would be the result.

A college is a hard thing to kill and the experience of Vermont would seem to prove that they will not die even when left alone.

In this case the dissenting college would be made no poorer in any of its resources because of the aggregated wealth of the uniting institutions. It stands simply where it did before. It has more than it had before. It has a quickened pride on the part of its sons, and if it shall have (as doubtless it would not do otherwise) taken this step by advice of its friends and alumni, it has a new pledge of their support under the adverse circumstances in which it is now by their advice placed.

In the mean time what have they on the other hand—those who have given in their adhesion to the new institution. Not certainly a one harmonized university for Vermont; but simply this—an institution consisting of an academical department with the addition of a department of science and art. The academical department is no richer than before except so far as it may derive a certain subordinate and collateral aid from the new department—for I do not conceive that it was the design of Congress or is the design of our State to give over the funds which belong to the department of science to support the academical department—a course which would essentially defeat the beneficent intention of the general government.

What is then to hinder the dissenting college from placing itself at once on a par with its rival by establishing in connection with itself a department of science and art, which shall compete with that founded upon the national gift? The money a comparatively small sum of sixty to one hundred thousand dollars, will certainly not be wanting. The Alma Mater may rely upon her pledged sons for that. If the money is required it will be had, energy and devotion will do it. What then? Shall we thereby obtain two flourishing institutions which may prosper side by side?—On the contrary we have two very poorly endowed institutions—maintaining their old attitudes toward each other—the donations from private individuals divided between the two—State patronage withheld from both, as heretofore—in fact, the old state of things — a thoroughly divided educational interest represented by two or more colleges lacking the vigor and vitality which spring from a concentration of energies and resources, and in the same degree lacking in efficiency.

Which ever way we turn, argue it as we may—for there are other views of the case which we cannot now develope—we still meet the same crying demand, the inflexible necessity for a union, a concentration in one form or another of all the colle-

giate interests of the State, whereby all its educational hope, its pride, its sympathy and its resources of every kind shall be directed in one channel towards one benefi cent end. What is then the best form of union? Unquestionably that which places in one locality all the collegiate institutions of the State and makes of them one University with its separate schools of Law, Medicine, Theology, Science and Arts, together with a well sustained academical department. This as it involves the highest degree of concentration, will ensure the highest degree of success.

Let the friends of education set themselves firmly and unselfishly to the accomplishment of this result, and they will be abundantly rewarded for every sacrifice, personal or local.

Failing in this let them still insist on a union. Let us have one State Institution under one general administration, whose several departments, even though they are in different localities, shall work harmoniously in the same grand plan and towards the completion of a continuous course of instruction which shall be rigorously adapted in its several parts as though all the colleges of the one University were in the same place.

Let us harmonize the present conflicting elements, so defining the functions of each department that it shall sustain the whole, and in no case interfere with another; and let officers and students thus be united by a community of interest and by a just pride for an Alma Mater liberal enough to embrace every department of learning, and to foster every worthy aspiration whether in the departments of science or of useful or ornamental art or of chaste letters.

Where a spirit of unselfish patriotism and humanity exists, it is easy to lay aside sectional jealousies and to overcome real difficulties. A most favorable moment seems to have arrived for the accomplishment of a union in some form, and the consequences to education in Vermont cannot fail to be exceedingly disastrous, if they who hold in their hands the sacred trust of its educational interest shall suffer any sectional or other jealousies to stand in the way of an event so full of hope and promise.

Yours, truly,

EDWARD HUNGERFORD.

The following is a letter received from Prof. N. G. Clark, now of Union College, formerly connected with the U. V. M., in response to the circular.

Practically acquainted with the wants of a college, and with the difficulties and embarrassments under which, within his own personal knowledge, the colleges of Vermont have long labored, and deeply interested in the educational welfare of his native State, the views of Professor Clark are worthy of attention.

SCHENECTADY, N. Y.
September 1, 1864.

Hon. J. S. ADAMS,
Secretary of Board of Education in Vermont,

My Dear Sir:

I received some time since your pamphlet on the union of the Vermont colleges, and read it with much interest. You request an expression of opinion on the part of the friends of the cause; and, though laboring in another field, I may be allowed to reckon myself in that class, after fifteen years' service as a teacher in my native State.

During my recent visit to the State I have had an opportunity of conversing pretty freely with a number of persons interested in the subject. From what I have there been able to learn, taken with the recent action of Middlebury College, the aspect of the question has somewhat changed since your paper was perused. What remarks I have to offer will be made independently, on the general question as it now presents itself for consideration.

Some things may now be regarded as settled.

1. The University at Burlington has cordially and in good faith accepted of the act of the Legislature, with whatever sacrifices it involved, simply desirous of promoting the best interests of learning in the State. Nothing more can be asked of her.

2. Middlebury college has refused to have anything to do with the union contemplated by the Legislature, and is exerting itself to find means to go on independently, thus perpetuating the past disunity, disorganization, and waste of educational facilities in the State.

3. The Legislature will not repeal the present act in order to set up an agricultural college by itself, thus adding to the present disorder by increasing the number of collegiate institutions. The funds are by no means adequate for a separate institution; besides, the attempt to found agricultural colleges by themselves has already been well tried in other States and resulted in complete failure, as in New York and Pennsylvania. Many of the States, as New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts, have already set the example of uniting the agricultural college with an existing institution.

4. It is now well understood that the purpose of the agricultural college is not simply to teach agriculture, to be a manual-labor school, but has a far higher aim. If anything were needed to prove this, it is only necessary to refer to the bi-monthly report of the Hon. Isaac Newton, Commissioner of the Agricultural Department at Washington, for January and February 1864. The object is to secure a broad, liberal culture for our youth—to secure the general development of the mind first, and then to apply this developed power to particular pursuits. This last part has hitherto been too much neglected in our higher institutions. And yet, this last part is dependent on the first. Whoever reads this report, which may be accepted as an interpretation of the act of Congress, cannot fail to see that it is only by uniting the agricultural college with an existing collegiate institution, that Vermont can reap the benefit of the act of Congress.

5. I take it that it may now be regarded as settled, that if the Agricultural College is not to be a failure, it will be united to the University at Burlington. If Norwich University accepts the act of the Legislature—of its action I know nothing at the time of this writing—it would more probably be with the expectation of going to Burlington, as the more desirable of the two locations. It would not be wise to attempt to build up another great institution close beside Dartmouth College. If Norwich comes into the union, she would bring in the contemplated system of military tactics already in successful operation, with the application of mathematical science to natural philosophy, civil engineering, &c.

6. But whether Norwich unites or not—desirable as it is on every account that she should—the new institution is to be a University for Vermont—to offer to its youth the advantages of a complete education. It will possess in addition to the old established collegiate course, a practical scientific course. It will thus bridge over the gulf which has hitherto separated to a great extent the college from the common school. It will soon command the interest and hearty co-operation of all the friends of popular education in the State, and secure donations and legacies to enable it to compete after a time with the best institutions in the land.

This last point may not be settled yet, but it ought to be; and the result for good, sure to follow, must commend it to the good sense of the people of Vermont.—The great draw-back is the unwillingness of Middlebury College to come into the plan proposed by the Legislature. It ought to be felt by all the different institutions, that local interests and prejudices should give way to a great public interest. If all were to unite on the plan proposed, and if Middlebury or Burlington were chosen as the place of the new institution, then the buildings and grounds of the others might be used for preparatory schools, one place taken for a State Normal school, under the direction of the University. Vested property in all might then be secured in a great measure for its legitimate object. But in view of the prejudices existing among the friends of the University and of Middlebury, only deepened at the late Commencement, I despair of any feasible union. As the case now stands, Middlebury

must be left out of the account, and the friends of education in the State must do what they can without her, or even in spite of her.

The plan of union of the two institutions under one head, with a classical course at one, and a strictly scientific at the other, and both united during a portion of the entire course, is one I have thought much of in time past. It is, or was, the only method of compromising the local prejudices on both sides, liable to some objections as all compromises are, and to some embarrassments in the practical details; yet as a step towards a better union at a later day, and of promoting a better and kinder feeling on the subject generally, to say nothing of reaching the long desired unity in educational labors in the State, and a greater economy of means, it was worthy of the able advocacy it received at your hands, and I would gladly have now the experiment tried, instead of continuing the present system of divided interests, and half-starved colleges.

There is very great misapprehension on the part of many minds as to what is needed for a first class college. The money realized from the Agricultural College grant ($135,000) seems like a large sum—enough for a fine institution. It is not half enough, as the Treasurer of the Vermont Colleges will tell you. It would require a funded property of at least three hundred thousand dollars ($300,000) to run a first class college in Vermont, after the first outlay of at least *one hundred thousand* dollars ($100,000) for ground, buildings, library, apparatus, &c. It is forgotten that the college is really a great public charity for the benefit of the poor young men of the State; that the tuition fees charged the students commonly amount to not more than one fourth of the actual expense of that tuition. For instance, take a college year of the University, five years since.

EXPENSES.

| | |
|---|---|
| Salary of the President | $1,200 |
| Salaries of the Professors | 6,000 |
| Salary of the Treasurer | 1,000 |
| Repairs and incidentals about | 800 |
| Interest on money invested in buildings, grounds, library, &c., say $70,000 in all | 4,200 |
| | $13,200 |
| Tuition of one hundred students | 3,000 |
| Balance given as charity | $10,200 |

The college in this way actually contributed one hundred dollars a year to each student to assist in his education. This is probably substantially true of all our colleges.

The college does not depend for its support primarily on the number of its students, and ought not to do so at all. The college should be as free to all as the common school, and if the Union contemplated by the act of the Legislature were carried out, it might be made so in a first class institution, without adding a dollar to the actual expenditure for collegiate education in the State. Take the Agricultural College money, take what is now sunk in unproductive property in each of the colleges, what is paid for tuition and what is paid by students going away from the State who would be retained, and you need ask for no more. You would soon have no need to ask, money would be given in abundance for all needed additions in every way.

I will propose the following as a scheme for a first class college, having from 100 to 150 students.

| | |
|---|---|
| Invested in grounds, buildings, library, apparatus, &c., $100,000, interest | $6,000 |
| Salary of President | 2,000 |
| " " Professor of Intellectual and Moral Philosophy | 1,500 |
| " " " " Greek Language and Literature | 1,500 |
| " " " " Latin " " | 1,500 |
| " " " " English " " including Rhetoric, &c., | 1,500 |
| " " " " pure Mathematics | 1,500 |
| " " " " Natural Philosophy and Astronomy | 1,500 |
| " " " " Chemistry | 1,500 |
| " " " " Natural Sciences, Geology, Botany, &c. | 1,500 |
| " " " " History, Political Economy | 1,500 |
| " " " " Modern Languages | 1,500 |
| " " " " Military Tactics, Civil Engineering | 1,500 |
| " " " " Scientific farming, gardening (with assistant) | 1,500 |
| Salaries | $20,000 |
| Annual additions to the Library $1,000 | |
| " " " Cabinet and apparatus, 1,000 | |
| Repairs of Buildings 500 | |
| Insurance, printing, &c. 500 | |
| Salary of Treasurer 1,000 | 4,000 |
| | $24,000 |
| Less by tuition of 150 students at $80 | 4,500 |
| | $19,500 |
| Or connecting the Professorship of History and Political economy with the office of President | $18,000 |

The increase of students will not diminish this sum, as it would require additional instructors. There is thus required a fund of $300,000 to run such an institution, including but two officers specially required for an agricultural college. The salaries are not higher than are required to secure good men at the present time, certainly not higher than good men ought to have; and in this estimate we have not included special teachers in gymnastics, nor elocution. However, if you reduce the salaries of the Professors to $1,200 and of the President to $1,500, we shall save but about $4000 on the total amount. On the first showing including the outlay for buildings, &c., we find the sum required for a good college to be not less than $400,000; and but little could be omitted to carry out the true import of the Agricultural College bill according to its official interpretation.

Now what are the facts in the case. Here is the Agricultural College money $135,000—not enough to be used alone, good to help out.

Here is the University of Vermont with a property of $150,000—of which $70,000 is invested in buildings, &c., leaving $80,000 in lands and buildings rented. Middlebury we will suppose has as much—for want of exact information. It is understood that Norwich has but little. Neither of these institutions can go alone; neither of them has half means enough for a first rate institution. They all require constant help to eke out their insufficient incomes, and at the best fail to do the full work of a college. By the contemplated union an aggregate sum of over $400,000 is brought together, counting in something for loss in one or more localities—enough to endow a first class institution, such as we have proposed. Such would be the magnificent result of having but one set of officers, buildings, &c., to an institution that would be the pride and glory of the State.

But the action of Middlebury College renders this scheme hopeless. It remains to consummate a less perfect union. By a union of the other three, or of the Agricultural College with the University alone, an aggregate sum of near $300,000 is gained, enough to do far better than has yet been done in the State, and by the generous contributions of the friends of education, and possibly by State grants, to realize eventually the true spirit and purpose of a University in Vermont.

I sincerely hope you may live to see that union and harmony and completeness in the educational arrangements of the State, for which you have so long and so earnestly toiled; and which I am sure is the hearty desire of every son of Vermont, wherever he may have made his home.

Yours, sincerely,

N. G. CLARK.

Although much space is given in the present Report to the discussion of this college junction question, the topic itself is one of such paramount consequence that no apology is necessary. The co-existence within the bounds of a State no larger than Vermont of three collegiate institutions of so nearly equal claim to public support, and of such equal merit, makes the educational position of the State a peculiar one. Hence if, as is claimed in the circular, through the proffer of the congressional land grant and its acceptance by the State, an opportunity has occurred of consolidating the educational strength of the State, too much consideration cannot be given to the subject.

The patent importance of the subject has attracted much attention in all parts of the State, and to some extent, a discussion of it has appeared in the public press. Without attempting to re-argue any of the points urged in the circular, it is to be remembered that the acceptance of the legislative act by one of the existing colleges, has decidedly changed the whole aspect of the question, and so brings prominently forward new points and on that account it is proper to consider briefly some of the objections, that have been presented to public attention, against the consummation of the proposed association or consolidation of colleges.

Throughout all the discussion that has occurred it has been universally conceded that one strong college is amply sufficient to perform all the collegiate work of the State; and that both for economy and for efficiency, one college, thus competent to do the work, would be better than three: but, it is said, that such is the peculiar condition of each of the existing colleges and such their relations to each other, that the difficulties in the way of consolidation are insuperable.

The unsuccessful efforts that have previously been made do lend some plausibility to such allegations; but after all only prove that under ordinary circumstances, the difficulties to be surmounted, the prejudices and partialities to be overcome, and the liabilities to probable pecuniary loss from the reversion of bequests of a conditional character, have all together availed to overcome such inducements to consolidation as have heretofore been offered; they do not show that, under altogether different

circumstances and with far more powerful inducements, any consolidation is now impracticable. In the case of all previous efforts to effect a junction, the only inducement that was or could be offered, was an indefinite hope of possible advantage to the cause of general education by a more economical use, through a consolidation of means, of the same agencies, resting upon the same pecuniary bases, that were then employed in various institutions. The power of such inducement was lost in the strength of the numerous counteracting forces. Each of the existing institutions, then as now, was endeared to the heart of every one of its friends, and in the hold it had upon their affections was identified with a thousand local associations and personal recollections whose pleasant and persuasive power would be lost by any change of the location of Alma Mater, and a liability to such a change was necessarily involved in the acceptation of any previous proposed plan of junction. Again the friends and Alumni of each institution, proud of the excellence of their own College, and willing to bate no jot of their claim to its superiority, were unwilling to enter into any arrangement for consolidation which, for a mere hope of general improvement, demanded in exchange the incuring of a possible abandonment of corporate existence, the acceptance of which seemed to be a surrender which involved a confession of inferiority.

All of these institutions were similarly situated in another respect. Located for a period of many years, each in the midst of intelligent communities, who appreciating their power for good, had largely contributed of their means to their support, these colleges had become intimately connected with the local interests of their vicinity. Many of the bequests made in their favor had been upon an express or implied condition that the recipient college should retain its then present location, and would possibly if not actually be liable to forfeiture upon any removal of the college. Large investments also had been made in lands and buildings, which in the case of the institution removed, would probably be to a great extent lost.

With a shadowy hope of general improvement, offering nothing definite or tangible as a compensation for probable losses, as the sole inducement to union, on the one hand, and so many and strong dissuasives on the other, the different attempts at consolidation resulted in failures.

But a very different condition of things now prevails, and adds force to the argument in favor of consolidation. The passage of the Act for the incorporation of the Vermont State University and associate Colleges, relieves the proposed consolidation of the main force of many of the prominent objections. An acceptation of the act involves no absolute surrender of corporate existence, but merely a merger of the special and individual form of corporate vitality in one of a larger scope and higher degree, which shall form a constituent element of the life of a higher and nobler and more powerful agency in the same good cause. Thus all appearance of making, by voluntary cession of life, a confession of inferiority, is avoided.

Now, too, while an additional experience of a quarter of a century has re-demonstrated, and that conclusively, the desirability of a union of the higher educational agencies; and an increasing annual exodus of Vermonters seeking education at the larger and more powerful colleges of other States has forcibly directed general attention to the impolicy and lack of economy of supporting three colleges to do with less efficiency what one could more successfully accomplish; a positive and tangible inducement is offered in addition. A way is opened by which, without any sacrifice of pride or feeling, while to the extent of the property now owned by the various colleges ample security is given for the liquidation of their debts, the surplus of all is aggregated for the support of a single University, and to this is added a fund which far more than makes good any losses that may result from any forfeiture of conditional bequests.—And at the same time, to whatever extent the act is accepted, so far all division of educational interest ceases, and the probability both of State and individual benefaction is increased. The reasoning, therefore, which formerly and under far different circumstances availed to prevent a junction, does not apply now with equal force; and many of the difficulties upon which that reasoning was based, have been essentially modified or have entirely disappeared.

It is said that if the trustees of the different institutions and those concerned in giving instruction are disinclined to any junction of existing institutions, they are the best judges of what will benefit or injure those institutions, and that it is idle to try to force them into conjunction by legislation. Various replies to such statements easily suggest themselves upon slight consideration. It does not necessarily follow that a long official connection with any institution enables any person to judge more clearly and wisely about the nature and extent and character of the education which such institution should impart, or of the comparative value of the means and methods by which such an education should be attained, than any other or all other persons. Indeed such intimate relations and close connection, by constantly presenting special and particular views often preclude the entertainment of liberal and generous notions and prevent the adoption of general ideas. It is difficult to inspire with an ardent attachment for the Greek Drama, one whose whole life has been given to geometry and conic sections, and Greek professors are not apt to take great pleasure in speculations in abstract mathematics. Defects in any scheme of education are readily discovered in practical life by the subjects thereof, and these defects and the remedies therefor appear far more clearly to him who has suffered from such deficiencies, than they ever did or ever can to one whose life has been given to a particular method of teaching and to a vindication of its special excellence—so, generally, it is something more than possible, that those personally concerned in the management and direction of institutions of learning might oftentimes derive useful suggestions in regard to such direction from men of mature age and of large practical experience in the conduct of affairs.

The allegation that it will be found impossible to consummate any plan of collegiate union, which is not acceptable to the managers of existing institutions, by legislative compulsion, is entirely irrelevant, for the simple reason that no such intervention of legislative compulsion has been dreamed of by any one. The simple question is entirely a practical one. The State has solemnly accepted a grant of land of great value, conditioned upon the establishment and support of at least one institution which, not excluding others, shall give instruction in certain specified directions. In endeavoring to fulfil the faith fairly and fully pledged, the State has incorporated an institution of the required character, but in its act of incorporation, and with a view of giving concentration and consequent increased force to the State educational system, an opportunity is given to each of the existing colleges to unite with and become part of the newly created University. There is no attempt at compulsion, but a way is opened for each existing college to merge its own existence in that of the new University if it chooses. And the practical question is, is such consolidation desirable as far as the interests of the new University, those of the existing colleges, and that of the State generally are concerned.

It is said that the present plan of collegiate education is complete, is not susceptible of improvement, or beneficial modification, by grafting upon it any new features whatever, or uniting with its present forces any other agencies. There is in such statements a sort of assumption of perfection and infallibility that does not well comport with the progressive views of thoughtful and intelligent men. And beside, there seems therein to lurk, and that without any very close concealment, a sort of logical absurdity. Man is claimed to be entitled to supremacy, because he is said to be susceptible of progressive and indefinite advancement and improvement—through and by means of progressive mental and moral culture, or by means of education administered, in the main, through the various grades of educational institutions. And, in order that the lower grades of the institutions of learning may properly and effectively perform their legitimate work, it is universally conceded that the lower schools should themselves progressively improve. No one denies this necessity for constant progress and advancement as far as the schools and academies are concerned. Why then does not the same rule apply to the colleges? Is there not then a degree of absurdity in claiming present perfection in the system of college education, remaining to-day precisely where it was fifty or one hundred years ago? The claim that "the college system of instruction is complete and can only be injured by any essential modification" is nothing less than a claim that the colleges are exempt from the necessity of progressive improvement which is conceded to apply to all the lower grades of educational institutions. It is a claim that the colleges, whose title to respect, affection and support is based upon their competency to satisfy the ever varying and ever advancing mental and moral wants of society, that begins to die when it begins to be stationary, and to stimulate a never ceasing development of a race that

in each generation starts from the ground of attainment of its predecessor and as from a vantage ground is thus continually stretching out its hands and extending its mental and moral cravings further and further—I say it is a claim that the colleges, the very enginery by means of which the harvest of each succeeding generation, the fruit of its toils and labors, is to be garnered up to become the very seed for a larger fructification in the next, are entirely competent fully to discharge this noblest and highest of human labors, and adequately minister to the ceaseless progress of men, they themselves the while obstinately refusing any and all modification or addition in their topics or methods, and under a preposterous claim of infallible perfection, remaining fixed, where their builders left them, as unchangable, immovable, and stationary as the very tomb-stones of their founders. Theoretically then the claim seems to be absurd.

And in practice it is none the less so. No previous century has equalled the past hundred years in the rapid advancement made in the development of science and art, and in their application to all the uses and purposes of life. Indeed when we reflect upon the advances made during the past fifty years in Chemistry, Geology and Electricity, in the applications of Chemistry to the improvement of agricultural processes—and in the applications of science to the improvement of mechanical labor, both in peace and war, we can not doubt but that the last half century will be memorable in history.

Not only is it true that the whole policy both of the national and the state governments must be essentially changed by the existing war for national life; but it is equally true that as great changes must necessarily occur in other directions. Not only have we been roused by the thunder of its cannon from the sleepy political apathy whose drowsy influence had benumbed our faculties, and been awakened to a newer and fresher appreciation of the obligations of citizenship; but on the one hand we have been crushed into a truer conviction of the power of Right and Justice as the only stable foundations of national strength and growth; and on the other, while the fate of the nation hung trembling in the balance, mechanical ingenuity and enginering skill almost instinct with life through the informing and vitalizing power of scientific knowledge, have again and again interposed, and have caused the scale of right to preponderate, saving the Union and the Government in the last extremity. Scientific knowledge and mechanical skill have gained a new hold upon the respect and regard of all, and when at last the clouds of war shall have dispersed, and once more our nation shall bask in the sunshine of peace, a different condition of educational requirement will prevail throughout the land.

The present generation and those to come will recognize, as famine shall accomplish a subjection which years of war have failed to effect, agriculture as the main stay of national strength, and science and mechanical skill as its right and left arms of offence and defence; and they will demand the recognition of their right to stand side by side with the classics, metaphysics and philosophy, in every course of study in educa-

tional institutions of every grade. And this demand will be enforced. Either existing institutions will modify their character readily and willingly, so that they can adequately satisfy the new educational wants of the country, or they will obstinately resist all attempts at modification and necessary re-construction, will refuse to minister to the educational cravings of the living present, while, soothing themselves to slumber by repetitions of effete and over-done eulogies of the classics, they demand, to the neglect of modern languages and natural science, and the applications of scientific truth to the ever recurring exigencies of the life of the present and the future, exclusive attention to a course of study whose adaptation to the wants of life one hundred years ago was the ground of its former selection. Such a course of perversely resisting all adaptation to the ever-varying intellectual and social wants of an advancing society, must necessarily result in the establishment of more progressive institutions, in the shadow of whose well deserved prosperity other and non-progressive colleges must dwindle and become obsolete.

Practically then, the claim that the college system of instruction is complete and cannot be improved by any modification is not well founded. They must of necessity be modified to meet and satisfy present wants and those that are plainly closely impending. And this involves no "disparagement of classical studies," and no slighting of the "old fashioned system of college instruction." It is only the expression of a conviction that as human institutions, they cannot at any one period assume a character of super-human excellence, but must from time to time enlarge their scope, elevate their standard, and increase their adaptation to the accomplishment of their original and, as well, present purpose, which is to fit students for useful life in the present state and condition of society. It is, without any disrespect to the love of ages gone by, a simple demand that in the colleges of the land, a more adequate provision be made for instruction in all branches relating to the military, mechanic, scientific and agricultural, as well as scholastic pursuits of life.

But it is alleged by another class, that while the college cannot be benefited, but will rather be injured by connecting therewith a scientific, military or agricultural school, the scientific and agricultural departments would surely be affected injuriously; because, it is said, those who do not intend to enter any of the professions, but propose to qualify themselves for merely scientific, mechanical, or agricultural pursuits, will receive less attention than those who are to follow professional life, and will fail to obtain thorough culture in those branches intimately related to their future callings, and that "specific culture" which is indispensable to their success. This is a very specious circumlocution whereby to express a favorite notion of the privileged circles of the old world and their subservient imitators here, which is that he who is born to labor and toil by the hands, is born to nothing else and nothing better, and therefore as his destiny is to be obscure and his sphere of labor lowly, his education should correspond. And of the same nature and of similar origin is another common allegation, viz: that the scientific and agricul-

tural departments must suffer from such close connection with the academic and classical departments, because, it is said, the students of the collegiate departments proper, will look down upon the students of the scientific, mechanical and agricultural departments; and the latter will be disheartened by finding themselves occupying a lower social plane, and an inferior position. And it is said that these things must be so, for it is impossible to eradicate these social aristocracies from our schools till the innate dispositions of the human heart are changed.

To all this several sufficient replies occur to the mind. In the first place, if social aristocracy is the prevalent tone of college society, and as they are constituted and managed must continue to be indefinitely, and if this is confessed by those most familiar with them, then these institutions are in direct antagonism with the acknowledged theory of Christianity and Republicanism; and the sooner their power to prostitute intellectual culture to even the tacit support of false and pernicious notions, is destroyed by absolute extinguishment, the better. And such assertions, if proved, would demonstrate to mathematical certainty the immediate necessity of a radical re-construction and re-generation of the colleges, and establish beyond a doubt the expediency of the admixture of other and truer elements of life.

In the second place, all this prating about the necessity of specific culture for those engaged in different pursuits is not only liable to objection as founded upon aristocratic and exclusive appreciation of an intrinsic difference in the honor and dignity of different avocations wholly at war with all democratic notions; but it is indicative also of a failure to detect and appreciate the true scope and highest end of all educational labor, which is, not so much to convey to the student a certain amount of actual knowledge, as it is by the disciplinary power it may be made to exert, through study and thought, to give that mental grasp and intellectual vigor, through and by means of which all sources of knowledge, and all avenues to truth everywhere, are put within the command of the individual student, and so he is himself made the arbiter of his own destiny. And the grand error is in supposing that this intellectual power, the legitimate result of mental training, is only necessary to the professional man.

See the miner guided by science as he pierces the crust of the earth and goes down, down, sinking his immense shaft hundreds and thousands of feet through rock and earth till at last he strikes the lead he sought in the very bowels of the earth. See the civil engineer as he scans with his calm cool glance and measures the heights and depths of the ridges of the mountain and then for years patiently directs his workmen, till at last the iron-horse goes snorting through the glens and over the crags, screaming in his hideous laughter at the folly of those who dare to attempt to "look down" upon the achievements of scientific labor. See the terrified soldiers in the New Orleans forts as they look up to see the screaming shells that coming from a distance of miles from an unseen foe, drop as

by magic upon their devoted heads. See the whole fleet of the Western Federal Army, left almost within the grasp of the enemy, to the utter destruction of the whole campaign, while calmly and coolly the skill and daring of a single engineer commands the mighty waters to rise in their majesty and restore that fleet to the cause of constitutional government. See the huge monster ship, as she leaves the harbor and with the starry flag at her foremast, and her hundreds of noble hearts and strong arms, "walking the waters like a thing of life," cleaves the myriad surges of the mighty deep and carries to other lands the tidings that, based on intelligence, virtue, and the acknowledgment of equal rights, in spite of all the efforts of an "aristocracy in rebellion against democratic institutions," "the foundations of our country still stand strong." See the aeronaut as above the smoke and noise of the battle-field he hovers like the eagle in his airy flight, scanning the movements of hostile armies battling for a nation's life; and then along the obedient wire whispers his tidings to the ends of the continent. See a nation's supply of bread for weeks and months stored in a single Western city while science declares that the productive capacity of the agriculture of the world may be doubled in a twelvemonth by strict obedience to her injunctions. Then say shall the authors of achievements like these be ranked as inferior to the lawyer, the doctor or the clergyman? When the achievements of scientific men have opened to view a possible future more brilliant than ever appeared in dreams of all past time, and out of present successes is born the query who is bold enough or far-sighted enough to set the bound of scientific attainment and say thus far shalt thou come, but no farther—we may well turn to ask the question, "what manner of men are they who fear that the dignity of the classics will be injured by an intimate association with the sciences relating to practical life?"

But, whatever may be the result of discussions as to the correct theory applicable in the present case, one fact will control the issue.—Whether with or without sufficient foundation in reason, it is certain that within the last quarter of a century, a known and declared public sentiment has demanded such a change in the methods of collegiate instruction as shall give more prominence to the sciences relating directly to practical life, and in obedience to this demand the more influential of the Eastern colleges have by modifications and additions adapted their courses of study to the new requirements of the age. And one of the results of the war will be to make any return to the ancient methods impossible.—Whatever we may fail to learn from the teachings of the war, we have certainly become convinced, that an inherent power to protect itself as well against internal treason as external aggression, is indispensable to the permanent safety of every republican commonwealth. No future exigency will ever find any of the existing loyal States in the defenceless condition, in which the present rebellion found them all. Some knowledge of military science, and a power to apply it practically, will henceforth be imperatively demanded of the leading educational institutions of

each State, and an adequate response to this single demand will make a re-construction of collegiate systems necessary.

There is another consideration which, in the minds of many, tends largely to increase the interest with which the friends of education are regarding the developments of the policy which will be pursued in the establishment and inauguration of the State Agricultural College. It is a consideration of very great importance in every point of view; and yet, one of so great delicacy that few will approach its discussion without reluctance. It is alleged by many who are interested in education, that during the last half century, in the management of the two leading colleges of the State, perhaps without any particular design, so preponderating an influence has been given both in the selection of trustees and of Professors, to a single religious denomination, that a wide spread feeling of dissatisfaction has taken root, and has long been gaining force among the friends of education belonging to other active and growing religious sects. While not many open indications of this feeling are given, in personal intercourse with many able and sincere friends of education, and from correspondence with others, I have long been aware of the existence of such a sentiment. This uneasiness has been somewhat stimulated by recent discussions in regard to the new University, and appears in some of the responses to the circular; and, whether well or ill-founded, the respectability of its source and the sincerity with which it is entertained, both entitle it to respectful attention.

As indicative of the prevalence of the feeling to which allusion is made and of its intensity, the following extracts from the communication of a leading Methodist clergyman in the State, are valuable:—

FRIEND ADAMS:—

If that *union* so much desired by all well-wishers of educational progress should be effected, what are we to expect who are well-wishers at heart and faithful sons we trust and claim of Vermont?

Ought we as a denomination to sit down and allow some other vestry or sect to swallow up $130,000 more in order to advance its own peculiar views? Are we to be excluded—are others to be excluded—must we fight or can we have an honorable peace? I know your own views would give to all their due. But really it seems to me that there are other persons in the State besides members of the Congregational church, or those who are its supporters or ministers, who are competent to have a place and perform the duties of the same, even in an over-grown and prosperous an institution as the * * * .

The church to which I belong feel cut by the course which our Congregational friends pursue. We ought to have, and I believe we have, as much State pride as any other church, and yet we cannot send our sons, we never can advise them to go to * * * * , because we know the whole moral force or nearly so of that institution—is to crush us and denominationally form the State. What can we do? please let me know what you think—I cannot give you a full idea of the intense feeling there is among us on this subject.

**And an influential and intelligent clergyman of the Baptist persuasion writes me as follows:**

Hon. J. S. ADAMS,
Secretary of the Vermont Board of Education.

Dear Sir:

Some time since I received your circular, entitled, "Can the Vermont Colleges be united?" and have devoted considerable time to a consideration of the subject which it presents, and to consultation with other gentlemen of my acquaintance, interested in the educational affairs of the State.

Although a very humble individual, yet, in compliance with your request for an expression of my own views, as well as a statement "of the prevalent opinions of judicious men" in my vicinity on this subject, I have the honor to submit the following suggestions, simply premising that others with whom I have conferred, while in no wise responsible for what I write, concur with me in the views which I entertain.

1st. In regard to the grand question, the desirableness of a union of the Vt. colleges, there is so far as I know but one opinion, in which I most heartily concur and which is decided and emphatic in favor of such a union, as every way desirable, not to say essential, to the interests of collegiate education in the State.

2nd. The plan proposed in your paper,—that of one University with branches at Burlington and Middlebury—seems, *in its general outlines*, the most feasible and practical of anything that is likely to be presented; and yet, in its present shape, and the posture of certain other things connected with our educational affairs, it is open to some very serious and important objections *in its details*, which I take the liberty most respectfully to suggest, and to which I invite your candid and earnest attention.

1. The act at present inevitably consigns the proposed Institution *to the entire control of one religious denomination*. The President and Fellows of Middlebury College, and the University of Vermont, are both under the control of one denomination of Christians—the first avowedly so, the other practically. I do not mean that there are not on their respective boards, members of other denominations, but the controlling influence, alike in numbers, and in point of intellectual and moral power, and in social position, in both, is with the Congregationalists. Of the twenty-three persons, of which, in the event of the proposed union, the new board would be composed, (I omit, as does your paper, any reference to Norwich University, as not at all likely to accede to the union,) of these twenty-three persons they would choose fourteen.

It is fair to presume, from the very nature of the case, that these would be taken from the denomination which controls the existing boards. How many of the persons named in the act of November last belong to the same denomination I know not, some of them, I think, are connected with it. In any event an absolnte majority of the new Board would be Congregationalists, and the State University would, from the outset, be *under denominational control*. As the corporation created by the act is a close, or self-perpetuating one, the evil would be incurable, and the State University, created and endowed by all the people, would be, for all time, under the control of comparatively a small portion of the people of the State. Other denominations would have little or no share in its government. Thus the Baptist denomination would have but a single member (Rev. C. A. Thomas, D.D.,) on the Board. The Methodists, so far as I can see, have only one; the Episcopalians none, and other denominations,—less in numbers, but still worthy of regard, and having a right to a voice in the educational concerns of the State,—would also be entirely unrepresented.

I have no word to utter in derogation of the respectable and useful denomination into whose hands the collegiate education of the State would thus be committed. I honor them for their noble and long continued devotion to the interest of sanctified learning, in this commonwealth, and throughout the whole country, and bless God

for what they have been permitted to achieve for a pure literature and a sound education; but if other denominations are somewhat behind them in this regard, they are only a *little* behind, and that little only in point of time; some of these are rapidly following in their footsteps, and bid fair speedily to overtake them, even if they do not outstrip them, in this worthy emulation. It seems to me that it is a grave mistake in point of policy, and a serious wrong in morals, thus to commit the enterprise to denominational control. All denominations ought to have a voice, and no one denomination a controling majority here. We do not want the history of Harvard University repeated in Vermont, by any party or sect.

There has been, so far as I am aware, no public reference to all this in the discussions that have been had in regard to the union of our colleges, and possibly no note of it may reach you from any other quarter, but I am persuaded that, where attention is given to this subject at all among other denominations, the feeling in regard to it is becoming deeper and stronger, and it is regarded as fraught with flagrant injustice to other denominations throughout the State. I am not impugning any man's motives in this matter. I know not whether the whole is the result of design, or of mere thoughtlessness. In either case the practical evil is certain to ensue.

Whether there be any foundation in fact for the impressions conveyed in the above quotations, it is certain that such or similar impressions do widely prevail, and tend to strengthen the general conviction that a reconstruction of our colleges is desirable, and they also indicate a probability that unless the management of existing colleges is so modified as to leave no ground for such objections to stand upon, remedies will be sought through the support of new institutions.

The whole case may be briefly summed up nearly as follows. The existence of three colleges in the State is very generally recognized, if not as an evil, certainly as involving a very thriftless and wasteful expenditure of means in the attainment of necessary and proper ends. This is true to such an extent that scarce one has been known for years to dissent from the proposition, that a union of the various colleges would, if it were practicable, without a doubt promote the educational welfare of the State. There is also plainly discernible a desire among many true and strong friends of education, for such a modification of the course of collegiate studies, as will give more prominence than is anywhere found now in our colleges to the natural sciences, the modern languages, and to those sciences intimately connected with and relating to industrial pursuits. There is also evident a strong dissatisfaction with the special and exclusive direction which is alleged to be given to the religious influence of existing colleges. In order to satisfy these wishes there is required a change in the character of any of the existing colleges so great as to be of very difficult if not impossible attainment under any ordinary circumstances; such a change requires an extraordinary emergency to make its adoption easily practicable. And precisely such an extraordinary condition of circumstances, resulting from the congressional land grant, and its acceptance by the State is offered by the act for the

establishment of the Vermont State University and Associate Colleges. What course of conduct on the part of existing institutions will be demanded by the enlightened public sentiment of the State? The probability that something useful will be presently accomplished, is largely increased by the vote of the corporation of the U. V. M. to accept the act of incorporation and fulfil its conditions. No true friend of education can hope otherwise than that a similar course may yet be taken by the other two colleges, and thus may be solved a very difficult and perplexing educational problem.

If there are defects in the act of incorporation, or any objectionable features, all these could easily be cured, after the act shall be accepted by all; or the committee of the different colleges, if disposed, could agree upon specific amendments to be urged by joint presentation, upon the passage of which the act should be accepted by all uniting in such presentation.

But in all probability such acceptation or at least conditional obligation to accept, must precede the accomplishment of any important amendment or radical modification; for, after an act of incorporation of such peculiar character, has been tendered to the acceptance of different literary institutions, and one or more have inperfect reliance upon State faith accepted it, absolutely relinquishing their corporate existence and transferring their vested property and trust funds, it can hardly with any reason be supposed, that a Vermont Legislature will subject themselves and the State to a well founded imputation of a violation of the pledged faith of the State, by essentially varying the terms or charging the effect of a solemn act of incorporation.

No question of greater practical consequence to the entire educational interest of Vermont can by any possibility come before the Legislature or the people, or the especial friends of general culture. But though susceptible of unlimited extension, the discussion of it in this Report must be brought to a close; and as I entered upon it with great reluctance, so now I leave it while the result is undetermined, with still greater regret. Recognizing it as of incalculable importance to the completion and perfection of the State educational system, and so, of course, intimately connected with the welfare of all grades of our educational instrumentalities, it was impossible to refrain from urging it without a conscious neglect of our imperative, as well as a disagreeable duty. With strong personal attachment to my own Alma Mater, I have had better opportunities than any other person could have to know the priceless value of the work of the other colleges in the advocacy and promotion of every good work and word. The high character of each and all of the Vermont Colleges is graved upon and shines through the character of our people giving it emphasis, as clearly as do her mountains characterize her physical outlines. And in the circular and throughout the whole discussion any departure from perfect and impartial fairness that may be perceptible, is attributable to accident, not to design.

Firmly persuaded that the seizure and improvement of the providential opportunity presented by recent legislation to consolidate the educational strength of the State, is fraught with consequences of more value to the cause of education than the results of the labor of the last half century, silence would have been entirely incompatible with official faithfulness.

If this union of strength be now consummated, then our educational system will form one complete and symmetrical whole—and in the not distant future, we may hope to see the whole system standing upon one broad and liberal basis, and administered in the same generous and humane spirit. Then will virtue and intelligence, in practice, and actually as now in theory and partially, be recognized as the real foundations of the power and permanent growth of the commonwealth.

## MODIFICATIONS OF LAW RECOMMENDED.

I recommend to you Hon. Board that an effort shall be made, to procure the following modifications of existing laws.

1st. A restoration of the provision of law as it existed prior to the last revision, requiring each District Clerk to make a list of the families and resident children in each district on the first day of January annually.

2d. The enactment of law by means of which the Town Superintendent of schools, on revoking the certificate of a teacher, shall be required to file in the town clerk's office a written statement of the reasons for such revocation.

3d. The enactment of law by which district clerks may charge to their districts a reasonable sum for their labor in the procurement of statistics pursuant to law.

4th. The enactment of law by which it shall be made unlawful to pay any compensation to a teacher for his services as such, who fails to keep the records required by law to be kept in the school register of his school.

5th. The enactment of law by which power shall be given to towns, so electing to do, to abolish all district organizations within their bounds, take possession of and account for all district property, pay all district debts, and in their municipal capacity assume all ordinary functions and perform all ordinary duties of districts.

J. S. ADAMS, Secretary.





